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## **A case study exploration of the symbolic leadership of Jean Byers Sampson : civil rights activist and educator**

Vincent Michael Pellegrino  
*University of Tennessee*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Vincent Michael Pellegrino entitled "A case study exploration of the symbolic leadership of Jean Byers Sampson : civil rights activist and educator." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Administration.

Mary Jane Connelly, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Lloyd Davis, Dan Quarles, John Ray

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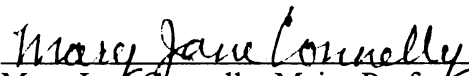
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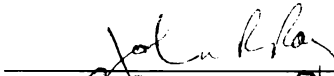


(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies



**A Case Study Exploration of the Symbolic Leadership of Jean Byers Sampson:**

**Civil Rights Activist and Educator**

**A Dissertation**

**Presented for the**

**Doctor of Education Degree**

**The University of Tennessee**

**Vincent Michael Pellegrino**

**December 2002**

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## Dedication

To my wife, Marcy. Her love and compassion supported me through the writing of this dissertation.

To my sons, Jacob and Jonah. You played and worded beside me. You were a source of wonder and delight.

To my mother, Geraldine “Geri” Theresa Pellegrino. You nurtured my interest in writing and encouraged my love of learning.

To my friend, John Guerry, Esq. Your steadfast leadership and friendship was the inspiration for this work. It is from you I learned the values of justice and leadership.

## Acknowledgments

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## Abstract

A literature review of leadership revealed that symbols are strategies for understanding and acting. Humans possess knowledge symbolically. Symbols are the starting point for all intellectual and expression. Symbolic leadership, therefore, refers to the idea that symbols can be identified from within the language and actions of leaders. Tierney (1989) identified six symbolic categories from the language of a leader: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational. Tierney theorized that symbols were given their meaning from the context in which they resided.

Utilizing Tierney's theory, this exploratory study examined archived, documents, artifacts and interview data for the role symbols and symbolic context played in the life of a leader. A within-case analysis of the life of Jean Byers Sampson, civil rights activist and educator was undertaken to explore the questions: what were the symbolic forms and contextual surroundings of her leadership? The findings indicate: an important part of the meaning of Jean Byers Sampson's symbols of leadership was derived for the larger context in which the symbols were used; Jean Byers Sampson's leadership and values were likely to recur when similar contextual conditions arose; Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbols and values were meant to induce action or agreement in others and, therefore Tierney's theory can be supported. What emerges significantly from this study, is that by examining the context for symbolic leadership, one can understand how the collection of symbols Jean Byers Sampson, either inherited or invented, connected her leadership to the institutions she served.

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

Leaders justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities and appurtenances they have either inherited or invented. It is these crowns and coronations that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected to the way the world is built (Geertz, 1983, p. 124).

### **Background of the Problem**

The phrase "...in some odd fashion..." in the introductory quotation exemplifies the problem scholars face in defining leadership. How does the collection of symbols leaders have inherited or invented connect leadership to the institution? It is widely accepted among scholars that leadership comprises a multitude of complex dimensions which integrate human and cultural phenomena. A literature review revealed there are a variety of theoretical and non-theoretical perspectives, yet the dimensions and a definition of leadership remain unclear.

Bennis (1959) said, "Of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination. Ironically, more has been written and less is known about leadership than any other topic in the behavioral

sciences” (p. 259). Twenty years after Bennis, Sergiovanni (1981) phrased the problem this way: “Leadership theory is more shadow than substance, more inferential than factual, more intangible than tangible, more subjective than objective, more linked to social meanings than social facts. Leadership is not a simple matter” (p. 1).

Scholars (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters, 1978; Sergiovanni, 1981) suggested leaders transmit their visions through their language and embed them in the culture of the organization in symbolic ways Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Fujita, 1990; Wuthnow, 1992 raised the question of whether symbolic theory may apply to actual leadership processes and if symbols could be identified within leaders language which could help in defining leadership? In 1989, Tierney studied the leadership characteristics of 32 college and university presidents and concluded that no meanings could be ascribed to leadership without their symbolic carriers.

The University Council for Educational Administration reviewed 25 years’ of studies, articles and reports on leadership including Tierney’s work. The UCEA concluded that, while it was not possible to reach any consensus of a definition of leadership, scholars were generally in agreement that organizational culture is concerned with the meanings of things which are embedded in the symbols and symbolic contexts of leadership in the organization (Hoy, 1994).

Wuthnow (1992) said, over the past quarter century, a revolution had taken place in the way in which social scientists understand and think about culture:

It was once commonplace for theorists and researchers in the human sciences to speak of culture as if it consisted of deep norms, values, beliefs, orientations, predispositions and assumptions -- all with an implicit stability and orderliness to which speech and action merely gave expression. Now, an increasing number of scholars question the fixity, even the reality, of these unobservables. Increasingly speech has risen to prominence among scholarly interests, losing the superficiality of its earlier reflective character, and becoming the constructive feature of social reality itself. The world is at once more transparent and more precarious. Speech is no longer the surface manifestation of firmer, deeper and dependable foundation values. For values they are now said to be constructed of speech. No meanings exist apart from their symbolic carriers. These carriers can be constructed and reconstructed, to give meaning and value, a fluid, dynamic and situational character. The realm of values, ideas, knowledge, meanings and symbols of which culture is composed is of vital importance to the understanding and advancement of the human condition. Symbolism is itself a reality that can be subjected to systematic investigation (pp. 1-2).

In an effort to narrow the research of leadership, I have chosen for this study, a conceptual and theoretical framework which focuses on a case study exploration and theoretical interpretation of the symbolic dimensions of leadership as a way of understanding how symbols bring meaning to leadership. In this way, I wanted to add

my research contribution to extend the base of symbolic theory and symbolic leadership theory. I sought to provide scholars with a deeper understanding of what a theoretical case study analysis could bring to a research perspective of symbolic leadership.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In this study, the research problem was to understand: What are the symbolic dimensions and contextual surroundings of leadership? To date, studies of symbolic leadership either have been non-theoretical or have viewed symbols as objects for conveying meaning. Geertz (1983) said researchers must get to know the symbols whereby leaders communicate their values, knowledge and attitudes toward the organization. Tierney (1989) was the first scholar to examine the symbols leaders use to accomplish their goals. Tierney's assumption was that symbols connote more than meaning. Symbols are strategies for understanding and acting in the organizational world. For example, a university mission statement is a unifying symbolic principle for the expression of leadership's distinctive values and ideas. Tierney said, "The challenge for the president is to understand how these symbols exist and in what context they exist" (p. 3). He identified six symbolic categories (metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational) demonstrated by college and university presidents. Tierney concluded that to find out how these symbols exist, one must deconstruct the underlying symbolic orientations that presidents bring to their leadership roles. Further, one needs to come to terms with the symbolic dimensions and their contextual surroundings in order to have any insight into leadership.



## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this case study was to qualitatively explore and interpret the symbolic dimensions and contextual surroundings of leadership using a qualitative single case study design and the theoretical perspective of William Tierney (1989). As a result of this study, I sought to provide scholars with a deeper and wider understanding of symbolic leadership.

Further, I was interested in learning how leaders interpret their roles and find meaning in the flow of the events they encounter. I wanted to strengthen my understanding of what may underlie the symbolic language of leaders. I was interested in what can be learned from a symbolic theoretical interpretation of a single case, such as if there were any alternative propositions to be found. By approaching the case study with theory, I engaged in debating the value of further investigations of symbolic leadership through this method. It is for these purposes I was interested in deconstructing the underlying symbolic orientation and context of symbolic leadership of a specific leader.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Symbolic theory can be traced to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. to Gorgias of Leontini, Greece who theorized that we possess sensory knowledge symbolically. Herder (1794) wondered if the reality of what was real had the character of a symbol. Cassirer (1923) theorized that all knowledge is symbolic and must be interpreted accordingly. Langer

(1942) expressed the theory that the need to symbolize is a primary human activity that occurs as the starting point for all intellectualization. Burke (1966) said reality is a construct of our symbol systems. Building on the works of Gorgias, Herder, Cassirer, Langer and Burke, Tierney (1989) theorized that leadership is defined by its symbolic dimensions.

It is only within in the last 25 years that symbolic theory has been applied to the study of leadership in colleges and universities. Sergiovani (1981) said, “The symbolic aspects of leadership are key to understanding university leadership” (p. 10). Birnbaum (1987) said, “... to emphasize the importance of leadership as myth and symbol is not to denigrate the role of college and university leaders, but rather identify a particularly critical function symbols play.” He said, “An understanding of symbolic theory may affect how leaders interpret their roles and find meaning in the flow of the events they encounter in the university” (p. 45). Bensimon, Neumann and Birnbaum (1991) said that while theoretical symbolic perspectives were found in only a few studies, they “...served to be looked at more closely because a theoretical interpretive strategy, focusing on symbolic language would be useful in gaining insights into university leadership” (p. 396).

Some of the contributions to an understanding of the symbolic perspectives of university leadership were found in research of colleges and universities as cultures (Clark, 1972; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Kuhn & Witt, 1988; Tierney, 1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1992); leadership and management as symbolic action (Birnbaum, 1986; Bowman

& Deal, 1984; Dill, 1984; Fujita, 1990; Pfeffer, 1981; Tierney, 1989); symbols as objects or reified objects that convey meanings (Dandridge, Mitroff & Joyce, 1980; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Pettigrew, 1979; Trice & Beyer, 1984); and the symbolic actions of leaders and their effects on campus during times of financial decline (Chaffee, 1984, 1989; Neuman, 1989).

### **Propositions of the Case Study**

Tierney (1989) said, “To speak of an organization is to speak of interpretation and symbols. An organization void of symbolism is an organization bereft of human activity” (p. 5). The propositions for this study are drawn from Tierney’s research and theory of symbolic leadership:

1. Leadership is defined by symbols which express the meaning of things.
2. Leadership symbols exist within an organization whether or not the organization’s participants are aware of these symbols.
3. Leadership symbols reside in a wide variety of discursive and non-discursive message units.
3. When we speak of leadership symbols we acknowledge, implicitly and explicitly, the determinacy of context (pp. 20-24).

Given that symbols exist wherever human activity occurs, a central question for

researchers is how to define, uncover and interpret the symbols of leadership.

### **Single Case Description**

In 1944, a young, white woman, private college educated, from a wealthy Massachusetts family went to work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This was the beginning of her career defending the civil rights of others. Jean Byers Sampson's life would be a steady course of advocacy for those who do not have a voice in society.

While at the NAACP (1946), Jean Byers Sampson wrote The History of The Negro in Military Service (1947). In 1947, Jean Byers Sampson organized a branch of the NAACP in Maine, founded the Maine Civil Liberties Union (1968), a branch of the ACLU, and served on the national board of the ACLU. While pursuing her civil rights avocation, Jean Byers Sampson taught in the public schools of New York and Maine. In the turbulent 1960s, Jean Byers Sampson co-founded an organization called Catalyst whose focus was to persuade college educated women to respond to a nationwide teacher shortage and return to college to become teachers for rural and inner city public schools. Twenty-four Tennessee colleges and universities, among a nationwide web of college and universities, participated in the Catalyst program including the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Vanderbilt; and the University of Chattanooga (Sampson, 1964). Jean Byers Sampson served as a member the University of Maine System Board of Trustees from (1965-1985). Jean Byers Sampson became the first female Chairperson of the University

of Maine System Board of Trustees serving in that role from 1974 to 1975.

In 1975, Jean Byers Sampson took a stand for the rights of gay students to convene a conference on the University of Maine, Orono campus and a stand against Governor James B. Longley. She was asked to resign her position as Chair. This decision brought her nationwide acclaim for moral courage in the defense of the students and moral outrage at the Governor for his discriminatory attitude toward the gay students. The AAUP bestowed on Jean Byers Sampson its distinguished Alexander M. Meiklejohn Award for her contribution to the defense of academic freedom during an episode of crisis. Jean Byers Sampson died in 1996 leaving an abundance of archival information surrounding her life's work. In the wake of her death, a community-based archival collection of material on diversity was named after her in the Albert Brenner Glickman Family Library of the University of Southern Maine. The core curriculum and a number of individual courses were redefined to incorporate teaching diversity.

As a result of her leadership experience, I sought to understand the symbolic dimensions of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership from the years 1946 - 1993, the context for her symbolic leadership, the values carried by the symbols she exhibited and how the symbols were communicated.

## Research Questions

Tierney (1989) said, “One needs to confirm the symbols in leaders’ words to allow a clearer understanding of a leader’s intention” (p. 20). From Tierney’s statement, I devised question one to focus on what of Tierney’s six symbolic categories were manifested in Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership. Tierney said, “Leaders should utilize symbols that are consistent with their organization’s culture. Therefore, leaders need to contextualize their symbolic perceptions and search for contradictions in their use of symbols” (p. 21). Question two focused on the contextual surroundings for the symbols manifested. Tierney said, “Presidents should draw upon all symbolic forms effectively so that participants can make sense of the organization” (p. 22). Question three focused on the values carried by the symbols manifested. Tierney said, “Rather than rely on the symbolic content of a single convocation speech every year, a president might benefit from employing a wide array of consistent symbolic forms” (p. 23). Question four dealt with how the symbols were communicated. The research questions were used as a starting point in the research. I knew that as the research evolved other questions would emerge as the case study progressed. The research questions gave a focus to the case study and helped to elucidate the purpose of this dissertation which was to qualitatively explore and theoretically interpret the symbolic manifestations of Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership. The research questions were:

1. What of Tierney’s six symbolic dimensions was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership?

2. In what context were the symbols manifested?
3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?
4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

### **Need for the Case Study**

Tierney (1989) said, “A symbolic view of leadership needs to move beyond a functionalist definition of organizational symbolism” (p. 24). Leaders utilize symbols to interpret organizational culture. We should not assume, therefore, that all leaders share to the same organizational values and vision. Tierney said, “If symbolism helps to define leadership in higher education then we should continue to struggle to come to terms with the symbolic dimensions of organizational life and leadership” (p. 26).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) said:

We need to know about the life of one person in order to understand something as complex as leadership. For example, we should look closely at a person’s socio-cultural environment and portray the ways in which that person determines and is determined by his or her context (p. 32).

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) echoed a similar theme and indicated that biography offers theorists an illumination of the complex layers of society, culture and politics through the lives of others. Bernstein (1992) suggested that what educational biographies

help us to do is “...construct, deconstruct, employ and deploy versions of ourselves as teachers” (p. 113). Rose (1984) said:

Researching life histories, through interviews and the collection of documents in archival settings, transcends the boundaries of qualitative research and provides a fresh perspective on the possibilities and dimensions for education such as new ways to examine how one describes the behavior of another or how to explain how the influence of the person studied manifests itself in the lives of others (p. 26).

### **Significance of the Case Study**

The significance of this case study was found in its relationship to previous leadership studies and symbolic research that has been identified. The significance was found, as well, in the challenge it presents to researchers to directly examine and interpret the social world of the individual leader and develop a portrait of the trajectory of their symbolic leadership. Symbolic analysis challenged me to frame questions that get beneath the surface of what was seen, heard and recorded to examine the symbols, context, values and communication Jean Byers Sampson brought to leadership. Through this framework, I pieced together the complex symbolic world of this leader. I sought to make a contribution to the advancement of leadership and symbolic knowledge.



## **Limitations**

The limitations of this case study concern the findings. The findings can be subjected to other interpretations. Further, the findings of the study will not be generalizable from case to case, but will be generalizable only to Tierney's theory.

## **Delimitations**

The study was delimited by confining the research to a single individual's symbolic leadership. Further, the documents, archived data, physical artifacts and interview data may not speak back to a specific time and context that are identifiable.

## **Definitions**

Context was defined as the unique circumstances which shape events, actions, behaviors and the meanings ascribed to them. In this way, qualitative researchers are able to understand how context influences meanings (Maxwell, 1996).

Discursive was defined as marked by analytical reasoning. Non-discursive is defined as lacking the characteristics of analytical reasoning (Tierney, 1989).

Meaning was defined in the broader sense to include cognition, effect, intentions, and participant perspective. The perspective on events and actions held by the people involved in them is not simply their account of these events and actions to be assessed in terms of its truth or falsity. It is part of the reality you are trying to understand. In a qualitative study, scholars are interested in not only the physical events and behaviors taking place, but also in how the participants in the study make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behavior (Maxwell, 1996). This focus on meaning is central to what is known as the interpretive approach (Bredero & Feinberg, 1982; Geertz, 1973; Maxwell, 1996, Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979).

A functional description of leadership for higher education for this study, was the taking of effective action to shape the character and direction of a college or university (Trow, 1984).

A symbol is an intuited expression which refers to meaning which is intrinsic and is not to be understood by reference to some object other than itself. A symbol is part of the human world of meaning. Symbols have a theoretical function which only humans are capable of experiencing (Cassirer, 1923).

### **Organization of the Case Study**

The case study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter provided the introduction and background to the case study, the problem, purpose, conceptual and a

theoretical framework for the case study, the propositions of the case study, a description of the single case, need for the case study, its significance, limitations, delimitations and definitions of the case study. Chapter two provided a review of the literature surrounding symbolic theory, leadership perspectives, symbolic leadership perspectives and an analysis of Tierney's empirical study and theory of symbolic leadership. Chapter three outlined the methods of case study data collection, analysis and interpretation utilizing archival records, documents, physical artifacts and interviews. Chapter three also reflected the experience, values and biases of the researcher. Chapter four provides an analysis of the data. Chapter five provided data interpretation, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: Review of the Literature**

Gorgias (5 B.C.) said...One must reflect on the values to which one has given one's heart and which determine one's will. As a result of attempting to spell out this honesty one may grow dissatisfied with one's self in light of one's renewed appreciation of their claims. This may deepen one's regard for these values and this may amount to a change in one from lightheartedness to seriousness. Plato (3 B.C.) commenting on Gorgias said...Here one may learn from the lives of other people where these values play an active role. These lives, in the case of the exceptional individual, may become a mirror in which one sees the significance of these values, a significance one had missed despite their familiarity (Schlipp, 1949, pp. 562-563).

### **Symbolic Theory**

The beginnings of symbolic theory have been traced to pre-Socratic Greece, most specifically to Gorgias of Leotini, who lived in Fifth Century B.C. Gorgias theorized that humans know through their senses and possess sensory knowledge symbolically.

Gorgias asserted three propositions:

1. Our moral judgements and decisions link outward and are amenable to reason.
2. Our moral judgements and decisions also link inwards and are an expression of the values we stand for as individuals.

3. The values we believe in frame the symbolic dimensions of our inner life and underlie all reasoning (Kanjirathinkal, M., 1989, p. 6).

As the quotation above suggests, Gorgias' theory influenced Plato to inquire whether the lives and values of some individuals deserve our close attention and imitation. Gorgias also influenced Kant (1754) to wonder if everything we know may in fact be determined by the structures of our minds and not by the actual nature of reality. While Kant did not refer to symbols or signs specifically, he wanted to understand what role these structures play in defining reality (Schlipp, 1949).

For most of the twenty centuries since Gorgias, the interpretation of knowing as essentially symbolic was overshadowed by Cartesian empirical thought. Cartesian thought expressed the idea that there was nothing in nature that could be separated by scientific reason or geometry. Cartesian philosophers, Descartes and Pascal pursued the question: What is man? The Cartesian quest for a general theory of man was based on empirical observations and on general logical principles (Cassirer, 1944).

Then in the eighteenth century, symbolic theory found its way back in the philosophy and theory of art and literature espoused by Johann Gottfried von Herder, a European philosopher (1784), who was interested in expanding aspects of Emmanuel Kant's philosophical system. Herder wondered if the reality of what was real had the character of a symbol:

What man achieves is the intuition of himself, in and through the theoretical, aesthetic, and ethical form which he gives to his existence. This is exhibited symbolically even in the very first prompting of human speech and is unfolded and developed in rich and many-sided forms (Herder, 1966, p. 225).

In the United States, symbolic action theory derives most directly from writings of Ernst Cassirer, Suzanne Langer and Kenneth Burke. Cassirer's (1923) response to the theory posed by Herder, was the notion that symbols, produced by the individual, were shared cultural products rather than merely a private means of individual understanding. Cassirer's anthropologically based theory of symbolic action appeared first in his three volumes of Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Cassirer said:

If one were to frame a minimum definition of the schools of thought of Heraklitos, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Leibniz commonly referred to as "rationalistic," it would be possible to point to: (1) their implicit trust that the reality at the end of a search, either exclusively or in part, must employ symbols; and (2) their insistence upon either a specifically refined linguistic symbolism, or some other symbol system, such as exhibited, e.g., by the mathematical disciplines. A mere "trust" in the power of verbal systems would define not a platform of rationalism but rather myth which conceives of all verbal structures as also mythical entities, endowed with certain mythical powers, [so] that the word, in fact, becomes a

primary force in which all being and doing originate (p. 16).

Cassirer (1923) used the term symbolic form in at least three distinct, but related, meanings: (a) often referred to as the symbolic concept, the symbolic function or simply the symbolic (*das symbolische*); (b) denotes the variety of cultural forms from which myth, religion, language and science exemplify the realms of application for the symbolic concept; and (c) is applied to space, time, cause, [and] number all of which are the most pervasive symbolic relations said to constitute those domains of objectivity listed under (b) (Lipton, 1947, pp. 111-125).

Symbolic form focused on the totality of all phenomena in whatever form it existed. When confronted with the question of where facts stood in the context of symbols, Cassirer said, facts cannot be evidence for or against symbols if only because “...their factualness is not considered meaningful outside of some determinate symbolic context” (Lipton, p. 120).

For Cassirer (1923) symbolic form was inseparable from meaning. Cassirer said:

The symbol-concept would apply to all contexts in which a sense-datum may be distinguished from the sense or meaning that it carries. It is most frequently referred to as one representing the other. Symbols act as vehicles for any and all meanings when related to an “interpreter” of these

clues to meaning. The selection of some value purpose as basic or ultimate is itself dependent upon the symbolic schemes at various stages of cognitive and valuational orientation (p. 122).

Cassirer (1923) expressed a rather fundamental moral imperative. He said:

Reason was an inadequate term with which to comprehend the forms of man's cultural life in all its richness and variety, but these forms are symbolic forms. Instead of defining man as a rational animal, we should define man as a symbolic animal so that we can understand the new way to civilization (p.124).

Admitting her indebtedness to Cassirer (1923), Langer (1942) developed the notion that the need to symbolize is a primary human activity that occurs as the starting point for all intellectualization. Langer said, "the influence of scientific empiricism was fading with the realization of the surprising truth that our sense-data are primarily symbols to attain as well as to organize and believe" (p. 47). The recognition of the power of symbolism was, for Langer, the cue to the inaugural of a new perspective on human understanding. The human mind, Langer emphasized, is not the passive recipient of sense-data, but is actively engaged in structuring data for use. Langer focused on the use of symbols in relation to conception and to expression, specifically in relation to speech.



Gorgias' (5 B.C.), Plato's (3 B.C.), Kant's (1754) and Herder's (1784) contribution to symbolic theory was symbols in relation to reality and knowing. Cassirer's (1923) contribution was symbols in relation to meaning and values. Langer's (1942) contribution was the significance of symbols and symbolic processes found in language. Langer said, "Language is the instrument through which knowledge is constructed. It is inherently valuative and symbolic. Symbolic activity is fundamental to all that we know to be human" (p. 48).

Following in the steps before him, Burke's (1966) voluminous writings on literature and rhetoric as symbolic action said the relation of an individual to any medium is understood only by examining the cluster of symbols the individual possesses. Gregg (1984) said, it would be difficult to find any scholar who has explored and employed the symbolic perspective beyond Cassirer and Langer than Burke. Throughout his work, Burke assumes that the human is a symbol-using, symbol-making, symbol-misusing animal. Burke was the first to advance the theory that one of the functions of language is symbolic inducement. Generally speaking, Burke said, symbolic inducement refers to those symbolic principles and functions that begin in the mind and invite us to action.

Like Cassirer, Burke (1966) said social order is symbolic order and symbolic meaning is derived from context:

We observed that as cognitive awareness of the autonomy of objects and others were induced symbolically, new attitudes and social awareness

developed in which the individual came to identify certain of his or her interests with the interests of others and so developed the possibilities of forming groups. All of these symbolic processes have the potential to interact with each other and to induce further symbolic behavior. Through all of this activity we saw constantly at work those principles of experiential stabilization that offer multiple or alternative meanings and experiences. The import of a perceived structure of meaning gets its significance from the full context of alternative possibilities. The very nature of symbolic activity assures the fecundity of context (Gregg, p. 66).

The writings of Mead (1934) placed great emphasis on the importance of meaning and interpretation as an essential human processes. Mead's theory of symbolic interactionism, suggested that people create shared meanings through their interactions and those meanings become reality. Further, individuals act toward objects according to the meaning objects have for them. Therefore, meaning was derived through a process of interpretation and definition. Expanding on the works of Mead, Blumer (1969) focused upon an understanding of experience from the actor's perspective. Blumer said that within each of us there is a structure of symbols which consists of mutually shared meanings that result from interaction and the reciprocal processes of role-making and role-taking. Blumer articulated three premises of symbolic interactionism:

1. Human beings act toward the physical objects and other beings in their environment on the basis of the meanings that things have for

them.

2. The meanings derive from social interaction (communication, broadly understood) between and among individuals.
3. The meanings are instruments for the guidance and formation of action and are established and modified through an interpretive process used by the individual in dealing with the things encountered (p. 76).

These premises led Blumer (1969) to a qualitative inquiry of how individuals perceive, understand and interpret the world. Blumer said, only through open-minded, close contact and direct interaction with individuals in a setting of naturalistic inquiry and through inductive analysis could the symbolic interactionist come to understand the symbolic world being studied (p. 79). With respect to philosophical and methodological perspective that symbolic interactionism brings to the research setting, the strengths include a mandate for in-depth examination of the social world from the actor's point of view. It is a particularly useful perspective from which to glean a rich portrait of the social world of higher education from those who experience it, rather than those who observe it. This means, however, that symbolic interactionism sometimes has difficulty grappling with the larger concepts such as culture (Patton, 1990).

## **Perspectives of Leadership**

Bensimon, Neumann and Birnbaum (1991) examined works dating from 1960-1989 on leadership of higher education from the perspective of nine theories. They grouped and categorized 60 studies identified as: trait, social power and influence, social exchange/transactional, transformational, behavioral, managerial, contingency, cognitive and symbolic theories. Bensimon, Neumann and Birnbaum said, trait, power and influence theories have been influential in works of leadership in higher education. Trait theories (Eble, 1979; Fisher, 1984; Fisher, Tack & Wheeler, 1988, Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Giley, Fulmer and Reithlingshoefer, 1986; Kaplowitz, 1986; Kerr, 1984; Kerr and Gade, 1986; Vaughan, 1986; Walker, 1979) tend to relate the effectiveness of leaders to individual characteristics or with comparing the characteristics of effective and ineffective leaders. Personal attributes included: humor, courage, judgment, integrity, intelligence, persistence, hard work, vision and being opportunity conscious. Interpersonal abilities included: being open, team-oriented and compassion. Technical management skills included: producing results, resolving conflicts, analyzing and evaluating problems, shaping the work environment and being goal-oriented. Undesirable characteristics included: being soft spoken, insecure, vain, concerned with administrative pomp and graviness. Bensimon, Neumann and Birnbaum said, the problem with trait theory is that judgements on the presence or absence of these characteristics are subjective. Few people exhibit consistent traits under all circumstances.

Social power and influence theories were characterized by two types: those that considered leadership in terms of the influence or effects that leaders may have on their

followers (social power and transformational leadership theory) and those that considered leadership in terms of mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers (social exchange and transactional leadership theory). Social power theories (Fisher, 1984; Keohane, 1985; Whetten, 1984) appeared to be an important influence in shaping presidents' implicit theories of leadership. From this perspective effective leaders are those who use their power to influence the activities of others. Yet, Keohane (1985), said power and influence could create an unwanted distance between the leader and the constituents. As a result, coalition building or bringing about effective shared governance, a critical part of leadership, does not occur. On the other hand, social exchange and transactional theory (Bensimon, 1987, 1989; Bennis, 1972; Birnbaum, 1988; Cohen & March, 1974; Giley, Fulmer & Reithlingshoefer, 1986; Hollander, 1987; Kerr & Glade, 1986; Walker, 1979) focused on shared governance and the image of the president as first among equals. The theory was particularly useful for understanding the interactions between leaders and followers. Yet, these studies ignored the directive role of leaders and those who create bold initiatives for change (Bensimon et al, 1991).

Exchange and transformational theories (Bass, 1990; Bennis, 1972; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bensimon, 1987, 1989; Burns, 1978; Cameron & Ulrich, 1986; Chaffee, 1984; Clark, 1970; Cohen & March, 1974; Keller, 1983; Kerr & Glade, 1986; Green, 1988; Hollander, 1985, 1987; Rice & Austin, 1988) were perceived to be relevant to an understanding of leadership in academic organizations that considered leadership from the perspective that effective leaders create and promote desirable visions or images of the institution. Visions referred to altered perceptions, attitudes and commitments.

Bensimon said, these were the first theories to recognize the role symbolic communications have in leadership. Unfortunately, no case studies of the vision of individual leaders have been completed.

Behavioral, managerial and contingency theories (Astin & Christian, 1977; Birnbaum, 1989a, 1989b; Blake & Mounton, 1983; Cohen & March, 1974; Dill, 1984; Floyd, 1985; Giley, Fulmer & Reithlingshoefer, 1986; Knight & Holen, 1985; Vroom, 1983) emphasized the importance of personal behavior and situational factors such as the nature of the task performed to understand effective leadership. Bensimon said these theories have had limited application in higher education because these theories focus on the relationship between superior and subordinate roles and the task leaders and constituents perform. Almost no attention is paid to what leaders learn.

Cognitive theory (Birnbaum, 1986, 1987, 1989a, 1989b) has held some importance. Cognitive theory focused on leaders as individuals who are believed by followers to have caused events. Leaders are subject to cognitive bias that can lead them to make predictable errors of judgment and to overestimate their effectiveness in campus improvement (Bensimon et al, 1991).

Bensimon, Neuman and Birnbaum (1991) said symbolic approaches to studying leadership appeared in works on organizations as cultural systems (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, 1989); Clark, 1970, 1972; Dill, 1982; Kuhn and Whitt 1988). These studies suggested that leaders play a role in creating and maintaining institutional sagas. Dill

(1982) said that although leaders may not be able to change the culture through management, their attention to social integration and symbolic events may enable them to sustain and strengthen the culture that already exists.

Bensimon, Neuman and Birnbaum (1991) said literally thousands of essays, research reports, scholarly and practical works have provided a rich pool of provocative but often conflicting ideas of leadership. Although much has been learned about leadership, there still is no agreement on how leadership can be defined, measured, assessed or linked to university outcomes.

In 1991, the University Council for Educational Administration commissioned seven study teams, composed of university scholars (Slater, R.O. (Chair); Bowman, L.; Crew, G.M.; Gelding, E. & Thornton, P.W.A.), to identify the traditional and emerging perspectives of leadership and management processes. The study team was asked to attend to both the empirical and interpretive perspectives of leadership and include in their report to the UCEA, the wisdom of practice and the knowledge of leadership scholarship; multi-cultural, emergent, feminist and traditional perspectives of leadership and future directions for the improvement and development of the leadership field in educational administration (Hoy, 1994).

The leadership and management process team began with four questions:

1. What is leadership?
2. How do we come to know leadership?

3. Why is leadership important?
4. What are the conditions of leadership's existence and effectiveness?

To answer these questions, the leadership study team identified studies of leadership in educational administration conducted within the previous 25 years. The study team then synthesized four sociological perspectives through their analysis of the studies: structural-functionalist, political-conflict, constructivist and critical humanist. The study team wanted to know whether the four theoretical perspectives were implied by broader and more comprehensive theories of leadership and perspectives of society. The study team concluded the sociological perspectives were so widely diverse in terms of a conception of leadership, leadership traits, power relations, leadership behavior or its interpretive aspects, that it was difficult to reach any consensus regarding a single definition of leadership. The study team commented further that the difficulty in reaching any consensus on a definition of leadership has negatively impacted educational researchers who have spent considerable time, energy and money on programs to improve individual leadership skills. The study team did, however, identify three themes from their study:

1. Leadership can only exist in the context of the human group.
2. Leadership is a social transaction.
3. Organizational culture is concerned with the meanings of things which are imbedded in the symbolic contexts of the organization



(Hoy, 1994).

The UCEA study team recommended, therefore, that qualitative case studies of individual leaders and their organizations, qualitative surveys of opinion statements of leaders and their constituents, ethnographic studies and semiotic or symbolic analysis of written and oral texts are needed for the hard work of developing a rigorous and systematic analysis of leadership to improve administration (Hoy, 1994).

### **Symbolic Perspectives of Leadership**

Symbolic perspectives of higher education leadership were suggested first in Clark's (1972) classic study of Reed, Swarthmore and Antioch Colleges. This study suggested that leaders play an important role in creating and maintaining institutional sagas (Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1991). Dill (1984) said leadership attention to social integration and symbolic events may enable leaders to sustain and strengthen the culture that already exists. Clark (1972) and Dill (1984), among other organizational theorists (Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce, 1980; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Pettigrew, 1979; Pfeffer, 1981; Trice & Beyer, 1984) tended to view symbols as either objects or as reified objects that serve as vehicles to convey meanings. Other researchers (Birnbaum, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Chaffee, 1984, 1989; Fujita, 1990; Neuman, 1989; Tierney, 1988a, 1988b; 1989; 1992) contended that symbols meant more than objectivized meanings. Symbols are strategies for understanding and acting. Symbolic perspectives of leadership also figured prominently in a handful of studies (Neumann, 1989; Chaffee,

1984, 1989) that examined the communications of leaders and their efforts on campus during times of financial decline and the role of substantive and symbolic actions in successful turnaround situations.

Tierney was the first to suggest that researchers could gain insights into leadership by examining the symbols embedded in the language of leaders. Tierney (1989) said, “Symbols are not simply vehicles in which meaning resides. Symbols are strategies for understanding and acting in the organizational world. Symbols, embedded in the language of leaders help the leader and organizational participants make sense of the organization” (p. 22).

### **Tierney’s Symbolic Leadership Theory**

#### **Problem and Purpose**

Tierney (1989), honoring the works of Cassier, Langer and Burke, theorized that symbolism defines and enhances leadership. Tierney said, organizational researchers in the previous decade, had begun to show an interest in the interpretive aspects of organizational life. Rather than viewing an organization as rational and objective, theorists turned their attention to an analysis of the organization as a socially-constructed and subjective entity. As a result, symbolism emerged as a critical theme in the works of Birnbaum (1987, 1991), Pfeffer (1981) and Tierney (1989). Researchers (Birnbaum, 1987; Schein, 1986, Tierney, 1988) also noted the significance of a leader’s use of

symbols. Birnbaum (1987) said, “To emphasize the importance of leadership as myth and symbol is not to denigrate the role of leaders, but rather to identify a particularly critical function symbols play” (p. 20). Tierney (1989) said:

If a central component of leadership is to manage the symbolic aspects of the organization then it is necessary to investigate what leaders perceive leadership to be and what symbolic activity’s leaders perceive they have utilized to fulfill their own perceptions of leadership (p. 3).

The research problem in Tierney’s (1989) study was to investigate presidential perceptions of leadership through the symbolic forms leaders use to accomplish their goals. The central purpose or focus of his study was to interpret the symbolic dimensions of leadership of 32 college and university presidents. Tierney said, to uncover the meaning, value and understanding of a symbol you have to investigate not only the symbol but its context. Symbolism is intertwined with participants’ expectations and understanding of leadership. The symbolic role of a college or university president allows an individual to try to communicate a vision of the institution that other individuals are most likely incapable of communicating. Yet, leaders are not entirely free to define what is or is not symbolic. Organizations channel activity and interpretation so that constraints exist with regard to a leader’s use of symbols. Merely because a college president intends for an open door to signify open communication does not mean that the faculty will interpret this symbol in the way the president intended. To adequately understand how leaders make sense of the organizational universe for their

followers, it is important to deconstruct the underlying symbolic, conceptual and ideological orientations that presidents bring to their leadership roles and contexts. It is these symbols, concepts and ideologies that shape presidents' perceptions of their organizations and presidential actions within those organizations. Thus symbolism both defines leadership and is defined by the organization in which the leader resides.

## Research Method

During the academic year 1986-87, a research team assembled by Tierney (1989) collected interview data from a national sample in which thirty-two college and university presidents (eight each from research universities, public four-year colleges, independent colleges and community colleges) were identified. The sample included sixteen new presidents (defined with three years or less experience) and sixteen senior presidents (defined with five years or more experience). The data source, for the sample, was derived from a five-year longitudinal study of college and university leadership conducted by the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance. Utilizing a common protocol, the research team conducted three-hour interviews with each of the presidents.

Data was obtained from three analytical questions drawn from each president's response:

1. What is the meaning of good presidential leadership?

2. What have you done as a presidential leader?
3. What are you like as a presidential leader? (Tierney, p. 10).

In reviewing the transcripts of presidential responses, Tierney (1989) searched the data for comments that were symbolic in nature. He disaggregated the data into six categories: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational. He said metaphors are figures of speech. The metaphors an individual uses provide participants with a portrait of how the organization functions. Physical symbols referred to objects that are meant to mean something other than what they really are.

Communicative symbols referred to the symbolic events committed by oral discourse and written communicative acts and nonverbal activities. Structural symbols referred to institutional structures and processes that signify more than who reports to whom.

Personification symbols referred to the leader's intent to represent a message with an individual or group. Ideational symbols referred to images leaders convey about the mission and purpose of the institution. Presidents generate ideas that serve as symbolic ideologies about their institution.

## Results

In reviewing the data, Tierney (1989) found no significant differences in the way the presidents symbolically perceived leadership due to institutional type nor did he find substantial difference between new presidents' and senior presidents' symbolic perceptions of leadership. Instead, he found similarities across types of

universities and colleges and between new and senior presidents, as well as similarities within types and among the same presidential generation. Tierney found that presidents used different metaphors to describe themselves. “I am militaristic...like a football coach...I am their counselor...I am the maestro,” the respondents said (pp. 10-12).

Tierney said, metaphors lend participants a way of seeing and acting in the organizational universe. The organization where the participants see themselves as a team presumably interacts differently than an organization lead by someone militarily.

Physical symbols were the most common symbolic devices cited by respondents. Physical objects and artifacts were used to signify a particular message. For example, one respondent said, “The acquisition of personal computers for the faculty was a statement about the distinctiveness of the learning experience at the institution” (p. 13). New libraries, attention to the grounds, a faculty club, school ties and a host of other physical objects and artifacts were cited as physical symbols used by presidents (Tierney, 1989).

Communicative symbols were most often cited by presidents to signify their desire to understand participants’ needs: mixing with students and faculty on a regular basis, spending evenings in the student center, attending faculty council meetings, calling the faculty by their first name, walks around campus were all meant to convey they understand their constituencies by, as one said, “taking the heartbeat of the campus” (Tierney, p. 14).

Of the six symbolic forms identified by Tierney (1989), symbolic structures were the only symbolic form that differentiated new presidents from senior presidents. New presidents tended to embrace decision making structures as symbolic emblems of change more so than senior presidents. Although senior presidents utilized structural symbols to imply other forms of significance such as keeping with tradition or appointing a traditional administrative structure.

Presidents often saw themselves as symbols of the institution. The president's willingness to meet the public was perhaps the most tangible example of symbolic personification cited by the respondents. One president said, "When we changed the governance structure we placed a student on the president's staff as a full member of the administrative structure". Thus the president perceived not only that the administrative structure symbolized a message, but also who sat on the governing body symbolized a message, in this case a concern for student ideas (Tierney, p. 16).

Ideational symbols were inextricably bound up in respondents remarks about institutional mission and ideology. "I wanted a new image of comprehensive quality," commented one leader. Another said, "I want us to be known for great education and not great athletics" (Tierney, p. 19).

## Conclusions

Tierney (1989) said, the symbolic images that presidents convey to their constituents are symbolic representations of institutional values. Many colleges and universities are committed to distinctive ideas. A symbolic idea serves as the unifying principle for the organization. College presidents who emphasize one idea over another impart a message to constituents about what they believe to be the primary goal of the institution.

Tierney (1989) concluded:

1. Symbols connote more than objectivized meaning.
2. Symbols are strategies for understanding and acting in the organizational world.
3. Symbols help organizational participants make sense of the organization.
4. The context and process of signification itself, the eventual shared interpretive activity with organizational participants, based on a common set of codes, endows symbols with their power (p. 21).



Tierney (1989) said:

Symbols exist within an organization whether or not the organization's participants are aware of these symbols. Symbols reside in a wide variety of discursive and non-discursive message units such as an act, event, language, dress, structural roles, ceremonies or spatial positions in an organization. To speak of an organization is to speak of interpretation and symbols. Given that symbols exist wherever human activity occurs, a central question is how to define and interpret the symbols of leadership. The challenge for the president is to understand how these symbolic forms exist and in what context they exist (pp. 4-5).

## Summary

A review revealed that the growing body of literature challenges scholars to examine the world of higher education leadership from perspectives other than those associated with the behavioral and instrumental aspects of leadership. While symbolic theory has been around since 5 B.C., symbolic leadership theory is a relatively new concept in higher education leadership studies. Scholars agree it is important for higher education research to explore alternative paradigms in leadership and slow the state of despair and retreat in scholarly efforts to define and understand the dimensions of leadership. Most of the research work, however, on symbolic leadership has been non-theoretical. To guide the epistemology, the UCEA called upon scholars to explore with

theory the applicability and usefulness of a leadership perspective in higher education research. The theory and propositions of Tierney's (1989) research guided the development of the framework, purpose, problem and questions of this study of symbolic leadership.

## **CHAPTER 3: Methods of Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation**

### **Introduction**

The methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation flowed out of the conceptual framework, purpose, problem and propositions and questions defined for this case study which focuses on symbolic leadership. The purpose behind the conceptual framework was to deconstruct, qualitatively explore and theoretically interpret the symbolic leadership of Jean Byers Sampson. The problem was to understand the symbolic dimensions of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. The study's propositions were drawn from Tierney's (1989) research:

1. Leadership is defined by symbols which express the meanings of things.
2. Symbols exist within an organization whether or not the organization's participants are aware of these symbols.
3. Symbols reside in a wide variety of discursive and non-discursive message units.
4. When we speak of symbols we acknowledge implicitly and explicitly the determinacy of context (pp. 4-6).

The research questions were drawn from Tierney's theory and propositions. The questions made Tierney's theory and propositions more explicit and assisted me with

what I wanted to know, with sampling decisions and with providing the provisional boundaries for my analysis. The research questions were:

1. What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?
2. In what context were the symbols manifested?
3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?
4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

My research methods were the means for answering the research questions. The selection of methods depended upon the research design I chose and what would work most effectively to yield the data needed. In this study, I chose qualitative research methods.

### **Qualitative Research**

I chose qualitative research methods for this study because I did not know a priori what I would find out through a single case study of symbolic leadership. I wanted data, rich in detail and embedded in context. Miles & Huberman (1994) said with qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations. Qualitative data were more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and to new interpretations. Qualitative methods helped me get beyond initial conceptions and allowed me to generate or revise conceptual frameworks.

Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Brewer & Hunter, 1989). The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects the attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, archived data and documents, perspectives and observations were a strategy that added rigor and breadth to the investigation (Flick, 1992). From the start of data collection, I decided what things meant. I noted regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions.

The strength of well-collected qualitative data lied in the focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings which gave me an indication of what life is like. Confidence in the methods was buttressed by local groundedness. For example, the data were collected in close proximity to a specific event rather than through the mail or over the phone. The emphasis was on a specific case, Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. A focus on her symbolic leadership behavior provided me with a bounded phenomenon embedded in context. The influences of the local context were not stripped away, but were taken into account. Thus, the possibility for understanding latent, underlying or non-obvious issues was strong. Qualitative data, with its emphasis on people's lived experience were fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and the structures of their lives. Three other strengths of qualitative research lie in the strategy for discovery: exploring a new area, for developing hypotheses or seeing whether specific predictions hold up (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Qualitative data analysis was a continuous, iterative enterprise. Issues of data

reduction, of display, conclusion drawing and verification figured successively as analysis episodes followed each other. Like their qualitative brethren, quantitative researchers must be preoccupied with data reduction (computing means, standard deviations, indexes), with display (correlation tables, regression printouts) with conclusion drawing/verification (significance levels, experimental/control differences). The difference is, however, qualitative research methods are more fluid and data analysis techniques strive toward pioneering (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Interpretive Line of Inquiry**

I pursued an interpretive line of qualitative inquiry (Bredero & Finberg, 1982; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Dilthey, 1911; Geertz, 1973; Maxwell, 1996; Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979). This line of inquiry has a long intellectual history. Dilthey's interpretive perspective contended that human discourse and action could not be analyzed with the methods of natural and physical science (p. 16). This perspective was a defining conceptual perspective for this and many other qualitative studies. Human activity was seen as text, a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning. Interpretive research is a theoretical approach designed to display and clarify meaning. Interpretive research asks what are the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced that made it possible to interpret its meanings? Knowledge was seen as a construction of relationships between symbols such as language and behavior or sense and value. As the interpreter, I utilized Tierney's theory to arrange and translate the symbols of human experience into an explanatory framework. Special attention was paid

to the context in which Jean Byers Sampson's leadership was displayed. The intent was to make sense of and understand the intended meanings of what symbols Jean Byers Sampson communicated and to place the analysis in a historical, cultural and theoretical context (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

I agreed with interpretivists (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) who pointed out that knowledge is a social and historical product and facts come laden with theory. In qualitative research, we affirm the importance of the subjective, the phenomenological, the meaning-making at the center of social life. My aim was to register and transcend these processes by building theories or testing theories in our various disciplines. The explanations flowed from an account of how differing structures produced the events we observed. We sought to find an individual or social process, a mechanism, a structure at the core of events that can be captured to provide a causal description of the forces at work. In this holistic way, we gained an overview of the context under study, the logic, the arrangements and the explicit and implicit rules. We attempted to capture data of individual perceptions through a process of deep attentiveness. We isolated themes and expressions that can be reviewed with informants, but should be maintained in their original forms throughout the study. A main task was to explicate the ways people come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day tasks. The researcher is the primary measurement device in the study. It was important for me to understand the value of a qualitative study which lie in its organization to construct, deconstruct, contrast, compare, analyze and bestow patterns upon interpreted data. Many interpretations were possible, but some interpretations were compelling for theoretical

reasons.

## **Case Study Method**

Within the various types of qualitative design, I chose the case study method for its unique strength to deal with a full depth of context and a variety of evidence: interviews: documents, archival information, artifacts and observations. Yin (1984) indicated the single-case study is an appropriate design for exploratory research where the case represents a critical test of existing theory. The case of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic leadership was a critical case for the testing Tierney's theory.

Schramm (1971) suggested the essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision: processes, programs, institutions, events or a set of decisions. The case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social and political phenomena. It has been a common research strategy in psychology, sociology, political science and planning. It is a frequent mode of thesis and dissertation research in these fields, as well. Case study investigations retain, holistically, the characteristics of life events. It is particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and when multiple sources of evidence are used. It can be a disciplined force in the reflection of human experience. Stake and Easley (1978) said case studies are of value in refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation. From the description of a single case, researchers can draw implications for other cases.



The history of the case study has been articulated by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg (1991), and Yin (1984). I chose to follow Yin because Yin searched for the fundamental pursuits common to both qualitative and quantitative research. Yin analyzed three thoroughly crafted research efforts: a quantitative investigation to resolve disputed authorship of the *Federalist Papers*, a qualitative study of Soviet intent at the time of the Cuban missile crisis and his own study of the recognizability of human faces. He found four common commitments: to bring expert knowledge to bear upon the phenomena studied; to round up all the relevant data, to examine rival interpretations, and to ponder and probe the degree in which findings have implications elsewhere. Campbell (1984) said of Yin's (1984) pioneering work in case study design, "It epitomizes a research method for attempting valid inferences from events outside the laboratory, while at the same time retaining the goals of knowledge shared with laboratory science" (p. 56).

Campbell (1984) noted the case study strategy makes explicit other implications of the hypothesis for other available data and reports how these fit together. The strategy also seeks out rival explanations of the focal evidence and examines their plausibility. The plausibility of these rivals is reduced by looking at other implications on other data sets and seeing how well these fit. Yin's intolerance for ambiguities in non-laboratory settings has been recognized by many scholars as a leading contribution to non-laboratory social science methodology (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## **Unit of Analysis: Rationale for Selecting a Single Case**

Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people nested in their context and studied in-depth. In this case study, my unit of analysis is a single individual: Jean Byers Sampson was an educator and civil rights leader, the first female Chair of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees. Jean Byers Sampson represents a critical and revelatory case of symbolic leadership. Jean Byers Sampson also represents a case for testing Tierney's (1989) theory.

Yin (1984) said the selection of the unit of analysis is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined. In this case study of symbolic leadership, the research questions were framed to help me understand what symbolic manifestations were exhibited by Jean Byers Sampson, the context for the symbols, the values carried by the symbols and how the symbols were communicated. The case study of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic leadership relates, as well, to a broader body of knowledge that is exhibited within Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership. Yin said there is a rationale for a single case when it represents the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory. Tierney's (1989) theory has specified a clear set of propositions as well as circumstances within which the propositions are believed to be true. To confirm, challenge or extend the theory, the single case meets all of the conditions for testing the theory. The single case was used to determine whether the theory's propositions were correct or whether some set of alternative explanations might be more relevant. The single case, therefore, represents a contribution to knowledge and theory-building.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Yin (1984) established three principles of case data collection: using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study data base and maintaining a chain of evidence. Yin noted that evidence for case studies may come from six sources: archival records, documents, physical artifacts, interviews, direct-observations and participant-observation. For purposes of this case study: archival records, documents, physical artifacts and interviews were utilized. A major strength of this case study data collection was the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence or triangulation. In triangulation, converging lines of inquiry provides the opportunity for multiple measures of the same phenomenon. The opportunity to use multiple sources of evidence far exceeds that in other research strategies such as experiments, surveys and histories. Experiments, for instance, are largely limited to the measurement and recording of actual behavior and generally do not include the systematic use of survey or verbal information. Surveys tend to be the opposite, emphasizing verbal information but not the measurement or recording of actual behavior. Histories are limited to events in the past and therefore seldom have any contemporary sources of evidence such as direct observation of a phenomenon or interviews with key actors. The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broad range of historical, attitudinal and observational issues. Yin maintains that any finding or conclusion is likely to be more trustworthy, if it is based on several different sources of information following a corroboratory mode.

Case study notes are the most common component of the case study data base.

These notes took the form of field notes, field diaries, summary sheets, memos, annotated bibliographies of archival records, documents and physical artifacts, interview audiotapes transcribed, organized, categorized in a classificatory form utilizing Miles & Huberman's (1994) coding list transferred to a computer disc for later use (Yin, 1984).

The principle behind maintaining a chain of evidence was to assist the reader of the case study to follow the derivation of evidence from the initial research questions to case study conclusions and conversely trace the steps in either direction from conclusions back to the research questions. First, the dissertation and case study report provided complete citation to the relevant portions of the case study data base. Second, the data base revealed the actual chain of evidence and circumstances under which the evidence was collected including the time and place of an interview. In other words, the goal was a clear cross-referencing to the methodological procedures and to the resulting evidence (Yin, 1984).

### **Gaining Entry to the Research Relationship**

The goals I had for gaining entry were to build rapport, maintain trust, assure an equal status relationship, retaining a critical distance and ensuring information flow. What I sought was an ethical relationship which would help me learn the things I needed to learn in order to validly answer the research questions. As the instrument of the research, I was mindful of the need to have participants be fully informed and to provide an informed consent to the study. Even with consent, I wanted participants to be assured

not be afraid to voice their opinion or disagree with me. I gave participants my written consent. In return, I promised I would keep their confidence and not take action against them as result of what I learned. The goal was to build trust in the conclusions of the research. One of the advantages of conducting a case study that was prompted by the President and Provost of the University of Southern Maine and encouraged by the family of Jean Byers Sampson was the ease of access to University Archives where all of archival materials, documents and artifacts, in their entirety, were located and accessible to me once these permissions had been obtained. The names of potential interview participants were culled from University archives, with permission of the family of Jean Byers Sampson. Twenty-three names were identified comprising the husband, two close friends and the former colleagues of Jean Byers Sampson. I wanted to be sure that informed consent, confidentiality, safety and security of all tapes and archived materials, documents and artifacts were in place during the study to build trust into the conclusions.

Issues of confidentiality are paramount regardless of the ease of entry.

Participants were provided with an Informed Consent Form, with choices to participate or not participate, and with the condition that the participant could withdraw at any time without providing a reason. I saw each participant individually and explained the goals and methods of research, assuring them confidentiality and the ability to read the transcribed manuscripts. I assured each participant they would not be compared with other participants and no names would be used. Pseudonyms for the participants' names were used in the final report as well as in the field logs, diaries, memos, interviews,

transcriptions, and writing of the dissertation to assure complete confidentiality throughout the research process. Audiotaping was done only by me with the permission of the participant. I asked each participant if he or she was willing to be audiotaped. I explained that the research would require no testing or manipulation and that I would be the only person who would have access to the tapes and the data. The participants were free to read the transcripts and final drafts of the dissertation as a way of providing member checks on the accuracy of descriptions, explanations and interpretations.

### **Archival Records**

Archival records for this case study consisted of: organizational records such as organizational charts and budgets; lists of names; personal records such as speeches, letters, newspaper interviews, calendars and telephone records. These records were helpful in providing a list of interviews. The archival records led to the exploration of documents. In some instances, archival records could not speak to actual events and could not be deemed relevant. The setting for archival collection was the home of Jean Byers Sampson, the University of Southern Maine archives and the University of Maine System archives. The time table for review of archival material was completely flexible and within my control.

When archival evidence was deemed relevant, I was careful to ascertain the conditions under which the evidence was produced as well as the accuracy of the archival evidence. Physical artifacts: such as work of art, computer printout or other physical

device in some instance had less potential relevance, but occasionally was an important component of the overall case. The methods of analysis for mute material evidence centered on establishing procedures for context definition, the construction of patterned similarities and differences and the use of relevant social and material culture theory of the time under study.

## **Documents**

Documents included: memoranda and other communiques; agendas, announcements, minutes of meetings, written reports of events; administrative reports including proposals, progress reports and other internal documents; news clippings and other articles appearing in mass media. Documents were used to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. Documents played an explicit role in the case study, however, one of the limitations of documents concerns the inability to speak back to actual events that have taken place. The scheduling of time to retrieve documents was a flexible matter. I was able to inspect what exists at my own pace. The duration of the document inspection was closely controlled by me.

Systematic searches for relevant documents were part of my data collection plan. For example, during field visits to archival centers, time was allotted to visit the local library and two other reference centers: the Maine Civil Liberties Union and the Maine Chapter of the NAACP. I attempted to be a vicarious observer in each setting in an effort to be critical in interpreting the contents of evidence which may have been written for

some other purpose or audience. I was aware, as well, that the material evidence may not be able to directly “speak back, “ but appropriate procedures provided room for the theory to confront interpretation. As the interpreter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), I learned from the experience of material remains that the data and interpreter bring each other into existence in dialectic fashion.

### **Physical Artifacts**

A variety of physical artifacts were observed as part of the field visit to the Jean Byers Sampson home. By observing and studying the artifacts, I was able to develop a broader perspective of Jean Byers Sampson’s life. It was important to distinguish between primary versus secondary sources of evidence among archival records, documents and physical artifacts. A primary source was one prepared by either Jean Byers Sampson or an individual who was a participant in or was a direct witness to an event in Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership life. Key questions were: Was the document really written by the supposed author? This is called external criticism. Some of the questions of external criticism of historic evidence were: Who wrote the document? For what purpose? When was the document written? Where was the document written? Under what conditions was the document produced? Do different forms or versions exist? Secondly, is the information contained in this document true? This is called internal criticism and the questions here are: Was the author present at the event he or she is describing? Was the author a participant or observer of the event? Was the author competent to describe the event? Was the author emotionally involved in the event? Did



the author have any vested interest in the outcomes of the event? With regard to the contents of records, documents: Did the contents make sense? Could the event describe what occurred at that time? Would the people have behaved as described? Does the language of the document suggest a bias of any sort? Do other versions of the event exist (Hodder, 1992).

A secondary source was considered to be an individual, archival record, artifact or document prepared by an individual who was not a direct witness to an event during Jean Byers Sampson's leadership years. These individuals or archival records, documents and artifacts were considered to be one-step removed from the event. The process of reviewing and extracting data from historical research was essentially defined by determining the relevancy of the particular material to the research problem and research questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996).

## **Interviews**

In this case study, instrumentation was the open-ended interview. Open-ended research questions were asked to allow participants to share their stories without reference to specific terminology or perspective. Interviews were held in the homes or offices of those interviewed at a time convenient to their schedule. Interviews were spaced at least two days apart to allow time for my reflection. Twenty-three interviews were completed. The selection of those to be interviewed was purposeful and flowed from the archival documents identifying those who could speak to the socio-cultural context of Jean Byers

Sampson's leadership life. The focus of this research was the symbols used by Jean Byers Sampson in her written and spoken expressions of leadership. I was not interested in what others said Jean Byers Sampson said, rather, I sought primary evidence of Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbolic language. The purpose of the interview was to ask the participant to describe the socio-cultural context of the period of time of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. Therefore, the purpose and nature of the research, the participant's role in terms of on hour of time and effort, the risks, benefits and rights to confidentiality were explained to each participant. The participants were asked if they were willing to be interviewed and audio taped. Prospective participants were told they could withdraw from the research at any time without penalty or reaction from me (Weiss, 1994).

After field contact, a contact summary sheet was completed as soon as field notes were written up, reviewed and corrected. The contact summary sheet focused on summarizing questions and pondering what concepts, themes, issues and new questions I found during this contact. The contact summary sheet was useful as a guide in planning the next contact. Notes were taken during the interview and recorded in a field notebook. Field notes were transcribed, edited, corrected, extended and revised. Respondents were referred to in pseudonyms. Interviews were tape recorded, listened to afterwards and transcribed. A copy of the letters of informed consent, a log of all phone calls, tapes and transcriptions of interviews were kept in a safe in a locked file cabinet in the basement of my home. I kept a diary, as well, to chronicle my own thinking, feelings, experiences and perceptions through the research process (Yin, 1984). The interviews were

transcribed verbatim resulting in manuscripts for each participant. The manuscripts provided a case record of the interviews and facilitated data coding. At the conclusion of the study, I destroyed the audio-tapes and sent the verbatim transcripts, logs, field notebook was sent to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for security and safekeeping for three years.

Coding means attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit retrieval and facilitate the search for themes and patterns. Codes are inductively generated using the grounded approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and emerge from participants' descriptions of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. Text was kept in an organized data base. Key respondents were asked for the context of a matter, as well as, an opinion of events of the time under investigation. In some instances, I asked the respondent to propose his or her own insight into certain occurrences to ascertain if any propositions exist for further inquiry. The interview subject was treated as an informant rather than a respondent. The informants provided insights into the context for Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. The interviews were considered verbal reports only. As such, the problems of bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation was present. Having recognized this limitation, I corroborated interview data with information from archival sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Data Analysis: Coding and Organizing Data**

Data analysis consisted of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise

recombining the evidence to address the initial research questions and propositions of the study. Yin (1984) recommends that every investigation should start with a general analytic strategy yielding priorities for what to analyze and why. I chose a strategy of following the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. The purpose and objectives of the case study were based on the propositions which in turn reflected a set of research questions, a review of the literature, the data collection plan, an analytic strategy and new insights. The dominant analytic technique I chose followed the approach of Miles & Huberman (1994) which was to make the case study conducive to statistical analysis by coding symbols and events into alpha/numeric form; placing information into various arrays; making a matrix of categories and placing the evidence within categories; creating data displays for explaining the data; tabulating the frequency of different symbols and events; examining the complexity of the tabulations and their relationships; placing the information in chronological order.

Having collected archival records, documents, physical artifacts and interview data, the challenge was to safeguard against tunnel vision, bias and self-delusion. Each wave of data collection resulted in a corresponding exercise in data condensation, reduction and analysis. Data analysis was guided through coding and ongoing, iterative reflection. Data reduction and data analysis was ongoing throughout the research process. Data analysis began with my reporting analytical procedures and processes as fully and truthfully as possible. Then, analysis of participant interviews was coded during data collection and as soon as transcriptions of interviews were completed (Creswell, 1994). All interviews were read specifically for codes that emerged from later

interviews. I synthesized Tierney's six symbolic categories through the archival material and interview data gathered around Jean Byers Sampson's leadership behavior. Tierney's theoretical ideas informed the coding of the data. A careful examination of codes helped generate theoretical ideas. Coding and working through iterative cycles of induction and deduction facilitated analysis and responses to the research questions. To review a set of field notes, transcribed and synthesized, to dissect them meaningfully while maintaining the relations between the parts is the essence of analysis. As patterns or themes were identified around each symbolic characteristic, dimensionalization (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was carried out accompanied by reviewing the analysis and interpretation for the dimensions and properties of each given theme. In addition, I met weekly with an education colleague, knowledgeable of both qualitative research and leadership, to summarize the status of the research and to discuss emerging themes, concepts and explanations.

Matrices were constructed from the coded data. Matrices were used to identify patterns, comparisons, trends and paradoxes. Further questions and possible routes of inquiry were devised to answer the questions that emerged from the matrices. Periodic review of the collected data, as well as, analytic memos, followed by summary construction. In the final phase of data analysis, each interview was reread with the objective of writing individual short interview summaries. The summaries allowed me to see threads that ran through the interviews and thereby maintain the context for quotations that were lifted out of the interviews and used in the writing up the research. Then using WordPerfect, I cut and pasted quotes from all the interviews and created new

documents for each code that emerged from the analysis. The compilation of quotations for each code was used to appreciate trends, contrasts and similarities. Matrices were constructed to check the validity of the themes that emerged from a theoretical perspective (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **Data Interpretation**

The emphasis of analysis lies in the interpretation of lives and narratives. Interpretation means attaching significance to the data, making inferences, building linkages and attaching meanings beyond the task of coding. To link data to interpretation, one brings the full range of intellectual resources, derived from the theoretical perspective, substantive traditions, research literature, interviews, archived material, documents, artifacts and interviews. The discovery and generation of ideas are how one moves from data collection and analysis to interpretation. At this stage of linking the data to theory and interpreting the findings, I was able to present a holistic picture of what of Tierney's symbols were manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. The emphasis in the interpretation stage was on illumination, understanding and the exploration of symbolic leadership: the symbols, the context, values and communication which defined this single case for symbolic leadership (Yin, 1984).

The steps in the interpretive process consisted of a phenomenological analysis characterized as *Epoche*. During the *Epoche* phase I was required to look inside myself, to become aware of personal bias, prejudice, viewpoints or assumptions regarding the

phenomena under investigation and to eliminate personal involvement with the subject material. During the *Epoche* phase it became clear what preconceptions existed. I appreciated the way phenomena are imbued with meaning. Rigor is reinforced by a phenomenological attitude shift accomplished through *Epoche*. Following *Epoche*, the second step is phenomenological reduction. In this analytic process, I bracketed out the world and presumptions to identify the data in pure form, uncontaminated by extraneous intrusions. In bracketing, I held the phenomenon of symbolic leadership up for inspection. It is taken out of the world where it occurred. It was taken apart and dissected. Its elements and essential structures were uncovered, defined and analyzed. In bracketing, the subject matter was confronted as much as possible on its own terms. The data were reviewed to pair up the symbolic perspectives of Jean Byers Sampson with Tierney's theoretical perspectives as well as to look at the context, values and communication of the symbols (Patton, 1990).

The final step was to write the case study narrative of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership years from a theoretical perspective. Validation of data was achieved by triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) of methods comparing archival records, documents, physical artifacts and interviews. I sought to go beyond the data and locate data in explanatory and interpretive frameworks (Yin, 1984).

### **Experience, Values and Biases of the Researcher**

From my first doctoral class in the history of higher education, I have been

interested in learning how leaders interpret their roles and find meaning in the flow of events they encounter. I sought to strengthen my understanding of what may underlie the symbolic actions and language of leaders. As a Vice President of a university for the last 10 years, I have had the experience of teaching leadership skills to university administration and staff, deans and board members. In addition, I contributed many volunteer hours each year to nonprofit organizations teaching leadership skills to board members and assisting in the recruitment of leaders for the Board. The experience moved me to inquire into what scholars have said about leadership both to improve my skills and improve what I could say to others about leadership.

However, I had never conducted a case study. The values I have for a case study of leadership are deeply rooted in honesty and trustworthiness in the conclusions. Because I have no prior experience in conducting a case study I chose to stay close to Yin's (1984) and Miles and Huberman's (1994) protocol for conducting a case study in which bias is reduced and confidence in the trustworthiness of the findings is valued. Yin (1984) pointed out that the skills required for collecting case study data are much more demanding than in experiments and surveys. The reason is the need for continuous interaction between the theoretical issues being studied and the data being collected. During data collection, it is important to take advantage of unexpected opportunities while exercising care against potentially biased procedures. Yin said a list of required skills includes: the ability to ask good questions and to interpret the answers. A case study researcher should be a good listener and not be trapped by his or her own ideologies and preconceptions. The researcher should be adaptive and flexible so that newly



encountered situations can be seen as opportunities, not threats. The researcher must have a firm grasp of the theoretical issues being studied. The researcher must be unbiased by preconceived notions, including those derived by theory and thereby be sensitive and responsive to contradictory evidence.

I do not seek to use the case study to substantiate Tierney's (1989) position. I am completely open to contrary findings. If compelling evidence exists that the symbolic manifestations of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership were not manifested or were not symbolic, the findings would reflect this outcome and offer alternative explanations. The quest for contrary findings collected and verified does produce documentable rebuttals that reduce the likelihood of bias. Finally, there is an abundance of archival evidence that Jean Byers Sampson had a profound influence and impact on the political, social and economic forces of Maine and on higher education in Maine. I am personally drawn to her display of commitment to others which correlates with my own commitment to civil rights and academic freedom. A case study of Jean Byers Sampson's life, therefore, offered a basis from which to build a vision for educational leadership and to enhance my understanding of leadership. Ayers (1990) said:

Teacher biographies and biographical research in education can provide examples of possible lives -- dynamic portraits of teachers working and making choices in an imperfect world, living in landscapes of fear and doubt, holding to a faith in the craft of teaching and helping students to reach a kind of greatness against the grain. This kind of greatness, when

deconstructed, layered and textured, for what could be, helps us set our own course as teachers and leaders (p. 269).

## **CHAPTER 4: Data Analysis**

### **Analytical Design**

Analysis of the data was ongoing from the initial phase of data collection. Tierney's theoretical ideas of symbolic leadership informed me of how to code the data for this dissertation. Coding was carried out utilizing a "start list and pattern code list" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 58). The archived materials and interviews were coded as soon as the archival material was reviewed and the interview transcriptions were available to facilitate the search for patterns and themes from the research. Data were coded when it was seen how the data functioned, how it was nested in context and what varieties of symbolic data were present. Codes are representations of emergent concepts which are theory laden. Coffee and Atkinson (1996) maintained that theory testing and theory building are developed primarily out of the categorization of data through the coding procedures and the construction of systematic, hierarchical relationships among the categories to form matrices to display the themes and patterns among the data.

As patterns and themes were identified, dimensionalization or transformation of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was carried out by recoding the dimensions or properties of a given theme. Matrices were constructed to display the recoded data. Comparisons, trends, paradoxes, themes and patterns were noted. Further questions and additional routes of inquiry were devised to answer the questions that emerged from the matrices. Frequent review of analytic memos of all the collected data were done every

two weeks throughout the study. Summary construction and formulation of new questions were done every two weeks throughout the study. In addition, I met weekly with an education colleague who was knowledgeable about qualitative research and this case study to summarize the status of the research and to discuss emerging themes, concepts and explanations.

Yin (1984) said, the preferred case strategy to follow in analyzing evidence is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to the case study. The objectives and design of the case were based on Tierney's theoretical propositions which guided the selection of the case and, in turn, reflected a set of research questions, a review of the literature and led to new insights. The propositions shaped the data collection plan and gave priority to the analytic strategy. The propositions which guided this study are:

- 1 Leadership is defined by symbols which express the meaning of things.
2. Leadership symbols exist within an organization whether or not the organization's participants are aware of these symbols.
3. Leadership symbols reside in a wide variety of discursive and non-discursive message units.
4. When we speak of leadership symbols we acknowledge, implicitly and explicitly, the determinacy of context (Tierney, 1989, pp. 4-5).

From the propositions, as well, I made the decision to study a single case. I also

made the decision to frame the study as theory-driven. The research questions flowed from the propositions as a direct step from the conceptual framework defined for the study. The research questions made the theoretical propositions of symbolic leadership more explicit. I asked myself questions about the symbolic dimensions of leadership. The collection of data was bounded by these decisions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this chapter, the results are examined with reference to the research questions:

1. What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?
2. In what context were the symbols manifested?
3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?
4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

### **Data Sources Used for Formulating Codes**

For this study, the data collection sources included: archived records, documents, physical artifacts and interviews. It was from these data sources that I started formulating data codes and searched for themes.

## **Archived Records**

The archived records proved to be most valuable in providing a primary source of evidence of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic communications. Speeches, a book, hand written letters, a diary of thoughts and general memoranda drafted by her was explicit of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic language.

## **Documents**

The documents such as university reports, board minutes and printed material provided anecdotes and amplification of events surrounding Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. Further, the documents were especially helpful in providing the names of those individuals who could possibly recall the events and who could add context to a description of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership.

## **Physical Artifacts**

The buildings and offices in which Jean Byers Sampson worked or founded were parts of the intended and unintended residue of not only her human activity, but her leadership activity as well. The amount of paperwork in each file Jean Byers Sampson kept was a measure of her workload and priorities. The many awards and certificates Jean Byers Sampson received was evidence of her leadership and added contextually to the description.

The archived records, documents and physical artifacts were once active products of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership years. The data I gathered from these sources was a material expression of her human activity set against an expression of leadership. In general, the archived, document and artifact material was useful in defining the coding categories and emergent themes.

## **Interviews**

Interviews had the effect of corroborating and augmenting contextual evidence from archived, document and physical artifacts. As such, 23 interviews were an essential source of case information about the activities and events surrounding Jean Byers Sampson's leadership, but not symbolic evidence. The interviews gave rise to additional interviews and to the discovery of new archived and document information. Once the interviews were completed, codes emerged from the transcriptions.

Miles and Huberman (1994) said it was important to search for preliminary codes in early transcripts and compare those to subsequent transcriptions to see if they were still appropriate. Preliminary coding helped me to know what was important to look for in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership communications and behavior. My preliminary list of categories and corresponding codes proved to be too lengthy and unwieldy to be workable. In addition, I assigned long strings of letters, for example, UnivTrARDRSyMtSP (from University Trustee position an archived data record symbolizing metaphorical statements in a speech). I reduced the codes to one or two

letters, one or two numbers, and assigned a position to each one. For example, M/N/1/SP/AR (Metaphorical Symbol/ NAACP/Equality/Speech/Archives proved far more workable and reliable in developing further codes. It was helpful to compare an understanding of the codes with another person. Codes which emerged as the study progressed were JI and JD which represent a Jean Byers Sampson interview and a Jean Byers Sampson diary. I did not know prior to the case study that any personal interviews with Jean Byers Sampson existed nor did I know that she kept a diary of personal commentary on all books she read on subjects of social justice, academic freedom, education and government.

### **Coding Categories**

In response to question one: What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership? Data was coded in six categories of symbolic leadership. These coded categories included: (a) M = metaphorical, (b) Ph = physical, (c) C = communicative, (d) St = structural, (e) Pe = personification and (f) I = ideational. In response to the second question: In what context were the symbols manifested? Data was coded into five categories representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Maine Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Catalyst; University of Maine System Board of Trustees and the Maine Civil Liberties Union: (a) N: 1946-1947; (b) MN: 1947-62; (c) C: 1962-1970; (d) UM: 1965-85 (e) MC: 1968-1993. In response to the third question: What values were carried by the symbols? The coded values were subdivided into 26



categories (1-26). Lastly, in response to the fourth question: How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols? Coded symbols were coded (a) W = written and (b) S = spoken. Data sources were coded: (a) Ar = archived record, (b) D = document, (c) Pa = physical artifact, and (d) I = interview.

One level above the start list of codes are pattern codes (See Appendix) which are explanatory and inferential codes which identify emergent themes, configurations between the data and explanations. Pattern codes helped pull together a lot of material into parsimonious units of analysis. The start list of pattern codes was added to the start list of codes tentatively with knowledge that subcodes would need to be added. The pattern codes included: Th = themes, CE = causes/explanations; CR = contextual relationships and ThC = theoretical construct. Pattern codes were tested against transcribed field notes or documents to see whether they fit. Lincoln and Guba (1985) called this “discriminant sampling” (p. 53). Pattern codes facilitated mapping out the component codes in themes and patterns. Pattern codes assisted in the development of network displays which helped me to see how the components interconnect (Bliss et al, 1983). Pattern codes were then tested in the next wave of data collection. This is largely the inferential process. New themes are tried out on new information or checked for a rival explanation. An explanatory effect’s matrix and a case dynamics matrix were helpful in sorting out what leads to what over time. Chains of evidence and a causal network assisted with the development of predictions of the findings of a with-in case analysis. Predictions are inferences that a researcher makes about the probable evolution of case events over time.

The following case report is an expression of my findings, but even more an expression of my research interests in symbolic leadership, life histories and case studies. The study of leadership has been my primary research domain for the past several years. I have spent hundreds of hours watching and observing the actions of community leaders as I recruited them and worked with them for various community and university boards. Primarily, I have been concerned with studying the language of leaders as evidence of how leaders interpret the function of the organization to participants. My observations of leaders have tended to focus on one dimensional element of leadership, the symbols leaders use to communicate.

In this case report, therefore, I have described the findings of symbols, in pure form, from a within-case analysis of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership in five career positions: (a) Staff with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; (b) Founder and Director of the Maine Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (c) Founder and National Director, Catalyst in Education Program; (d) Chair of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System and (e) Founder and Director, Maine Civil Liberties Union. In response to the first question, I synthesized Tierney's symbols of leadership through each career position. In response to the second, third and fourth questions, I located the synthesized data in an explanatory and interpretive framework of context, values and communication.

## **A Case Report of the Research Findings of Symbolic Leadership of Jean Byers Sampson**

### Breaking the Silences: The Beginning

“How did Jean become the leader she was?” I asked. Andrew said, “I’ve been asked that question many times. You know I really can’t answer it. I hope you can help me understand it.” I told him I would try. I said I was interested in learning how people, like Jean, use symbols in their language and writing. I told him, I thought it was important because we think, speak and write using symbols. I told him there were some research and theory out there that suggested a relationship between symbols and leadership. I said that if we could find out in what form the symbols existed and how they functioned we may find out something about Jean’s leadership. Andrew said, symbols? What kind of symbols are you looking for? I said, well, for example, I was seeking any metaphors Jean may have used to communicate her ideas. He thought for a minute and said, “You know Jean was very involved in the women’s struggle and the problems of the poor. She coined the term glass ceiling which was picked up by Felice Schwartz and turned into a book about women and jobs back in the 1960s, of course everyone uses it now.” I expressed my surprise. That was Jean? I said awkwardly, “Yes, that was Jean. And, if you are looking for more symbols then why don’t, we begin this interview? You find the answers.”

Jean Byers Sampson was born in Somerville, Massachusetts on June 12,

1923. Jean Byers Sampson was an only child and the daughter of Matthew Arthur Byers and Alice Gannon Byers who were not college educated, but wanted only the best for her.

Her mother and father loved her beyond measure, particularly her father. She attended public schools in New York and New Jersey as her parents moved around. They exposed to her to travel, music, dance, various entertainment. Her parents hoped she would attend Smith College which she fortunately did in 1940. She was a philosophy-history major. This was the beginning of Jean's transformation really. Smith had a profound effect on her development. At Smith, her instructors encouraged her to devote her energies toward the welfare of minorities at the NAACP where she volunteered on the National Staff in 1941. They encouraged her to serve the poor. Several mornings each week Jean would visit an elderly Negro woman to read books and poems. Together they loved to read Edna St. Vincent Milay and Emily Dickinson. Jean graduated from Smith with a B.A. in History in 1944. She took a job as a special project writer for the NAACP in 1946 and she researched and wrote The Study of the Negro in Military Service, which was published by the War Department. That study helped pave the way for President Harry Truman's decision to desegregate the armed forces after World War II. She founded the Maine Branch of the NAACP in 1947 and served it all of her life. Then she volunteered for the League of Women Voters. During that time Jean

served on a variety of government task forces and advisory committees including the Maine Democratic party convention and platform committees. She was a political speech writer for them. She was a jury commissioner. She was a delegate to a White House conference on children and youth. Her love was education. She taught social studies for a year. She served on the Maine State Board of Education and was an advisor to various Governors on education. She served on curriculum committees and as a delegate to various education conferences. In 1962, she founded the Catalyst Education Program. This is how it all began for Jean and how serious issues of freedom and justice were nurtured in Jean. I am sure Jean did not know she was a leader for a very long time or for that matter if she ever knew what others knew and thought about her as a leader. She preferred not to take credit for things. She didn't like to be out front, but she did like to serve others. Jean was a voracious reader. My god she must have read two books each week, books by Henry James, Chekhov, Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt and countless others. She maintained a log of the books she read and comments on each one of them. Many of these books were about government, education, social justice, equality, freedom and human dignity. As I told you, Jean coined the phrase "glass ceiling" which was used, as you say, as a metaphor for women's struggles. For that matter Catalyst is a metaphor as well. (Andrew, interview, July 25, 2000).

Brice said, “Whatever you think of Jean, you must understand that her leadership was shaped by her Smith experiences. Her commitment to those whose voices were not heard by society was unlikely of her population of white, private college educated women of her time” (interview, July 26, 2000). Constance said, “Jean had an unwavering commitment to justice. Little wonder that her later life was filled with these same qualities “ (interview, July 28, 2000). Daniel said, “She was a woman of tremendous courage. She did not want her friends to feel her pain of pancreatic cancer. At our last dinner together, she summoned up the courage and strength to be with good friends. She looked to us as though she might go on forever. Her legacy of social justice and academic freedom will live forever” (Interview, July 28, 2000).

But Ethan saw Jean Byers Sampson’s life in metaphorical terms:

Jean, though always a homemaker, built a career of singularly effective civic commitment. She was part of a small, determined, valiant first wave of contemporary women to venture into the main stream of public concerns. Jean was not merely a public person. She was an equally impressive private person. She loved her family. She loved to travel. She loved reading, especially poetry. Books seemed to cluster around her as if clamoring for her attention. She loved fishing and being outdoors. She loved music and to sing. In a meeting with her, she would look you straight in the eye and quickly level the playing field. She had a way of speaking that made one think of an artist who knows that the spaces

around objects are as vital to a painting as the objects. With her, silences were as important as breaking the silence. I could list all of Jean's leadership positions and awards, but I think a different tack would be more appropriate.

After Abraham Lincoln retired from Congress, much against his will and with a sense of frustration, he said to his young partner Herndon, "How hard, oh how hard it is to die and leave one's country no better than if one had never lived for it." Let's take our cue from this thought and revisit Jean's career by trying to imagine if she had never lived. If Jean Sampson had never lived, her ground-breaking work, A Study of the Negro in Military Service researched and written for the NAACP in June, 1947, just after her graduation from Smith would not have been proudly adopted as unique in the field and published by the Department of Defense. I cannot think it mere coincidence that President Truman, in his special message on civil rights, on February 2, 1948, called on the Secretary of Defense to stop discrimination in the military services as soon as possible. If Jean Sampson had never lived, both the Maine Branch of the NAACP and the celebrated women's glass ceiling breaker, Catalyst, of which she was the founder, might have been delayed, diluted or diverted. If Jean had never lived, there simply could not have been a chair of the University of Maine Board of Trustees to lead them unanimously to resist a gubernatorial request that all of them resign to make room for an entire new slate of

appointees. Their refusal won national recognition and the rarely bestowed Meiklejohn Award for their contribution to academic freedom. If Jean Byers Sampson had never lived there would not be a Maine Civil Liberties Union. And, if I may give a personal testimony, if Jean had never lived, my gubernatorial campaign in 1960 would not have had her as research director and head of our issues committee. So if Jean had never lived, who would have missed her? Only races of men, the poor, the young, all women, gay men and lesbians and those caught up on either the criminal or civil side of our court system (interview, July 31, 2000).

### **The Lowest of the Low: Working with the NAACP 1946 - 1947**

The Founding of the Maine Branch of the National Association of Colored People 1947-1962

From its founding in 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People encompassed two goals. The first goal was to remove social barriers and the second was to raise the level of race consciousness and pride. The national movement was able to effect far reaching changes due to mass migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban South and North during the 1940s. During that time, increased activism and militancy broadened the NAACP's fight against racism through the courts and at the grass roots level (Jewell, 1985, p. 57).



Felicia said:

The tradition of the NAACP during that time was to operate through legal means. It has not been traditionally an organization that was viewed as having been aggressive enough for some people's needs, particularly Jean's. Membership of both Blacks and Whites tended to water down militancy. But, in the long run, Jean and others thought very highly that the NAACP had accomplished a great deal toward achieving some civil rights for Blacks, but they were very conservative and did not want to antagonize people. Despite the successes of the movement, racism remained a factor in American society. Given the sad state of Black power politics in the country, I'm sure Jean knew the only way to have a conversation on this issue was to take a leadership position, which she did, write that book, and then be the founder of the Maine Branch of the NAACP (interview, July 26, 2000).

The NAACP wrote of Jean Byers, "Realizing the need for a complete history of the Negro in World War II, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has commissioned a 22-year-old white girl, Miss Jean Byers to write such an account" (Coppoc, 1946, p. 1).

A civilian assistant to the Secretary of Defense wrote:

With official Defense Department approval, a recently graduated young college woman, non-Negro, was afforded full access to Department records, historical materials and press reports for the period of World War II. It is important to note that the writer was chosen as one prepared for making an analytical objective study of available sources, being otherwise removed from the military and the race. With the advantages and limitations inherent in this situation the resulting study is unique among those which have been made upon this topic (Evans, review of the monograph, 1950).

Jean Byers wrote:

One recommendation of the President's Civil Rights Committee that I found particularly heartening was the demand for the elimination of segregation and discrimination in our country's armed forces. For the past two years, I have been working on a book on the history of the Negro troops in World War II. There is one story I will always remember. It concerned a group of colored soldiers traveling by train from one hospital to another in the South. Their train stopped in one small town. The men got out to look for a place to eat. As in many similar small Southern towns, there was no place for Negroes to eat except in the kitchen of the station restaurant. The idea of these soldiers of our country having to eat in the kitchen was bad enough, but what was worse was what they saw as

they looked out into the restaurant. There was a large detachment of prisoners of war laughing, talking and enjoying the restaurant our own soldiers were denied! It is for these men that I have undertaken to write this book (Sampson, speech, 1947).

Jean Byers Sampson said:

Having written A Study of the Negro in Military Service, I have come to believe there are reasons why the problem of segregation is of extreme importance to everyone and it is the reason why I am developing the Maine Chapter of the NAACP. The first reason concerns the beliefs upon which this country was founded and upon which its greatness is based. Everyone knows this is the land of the free, the land of opportunity, the cradle of liberty, the home of democracy and that the American flag symbolizes the equality of all men and guarantees to all of us the protection of life, liberty and property, freedom of speech, religion and racial tolerance. These ideas incorporate the essential dignity of all men to have the inalienable right to freedom. Justice and fair opportunities are the means to that end. These ideals are the foundation for the highest laws of our land and they must be upheld. The enforced segregation of any group of people is a direct denial of the principles upon which our government is based. We cannot be content to profess a belief in equality and practice inequality. If we are to derive any personal satisfaction from being part of

this country and the things we believe in, we must abolish segregation to receive the satisfaction and the true meaning of freedom (Sampson, speech, date unknown).

The following symbols were identified in pure form from Jean Byers Sampson's written and spoken materials, first, during the writing of A Study of the Negro in Military Service for the NAACP in 1946 and, second, from the founding of the Maine Branch of the NAACP in 1947.

### **A Study of the Negro in Military Service Working with the NAACP 1946-1947**

What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?

#### Metaphorical Symbols

1. Negroes were *the mess men of the military, the lowest of the low.*
2. It was the struggle of the Negro *to fight for the right to fight.*
3. The Negro had *to push his way into battle only to be pulled from it.*
4. The Negro was made *to become a first-class fighting entity only to become a nonentity.*
5. There was no denying that Negro soldiers were single-minded about their patriotism.
6. They were the rejected class.

### Physical Symbols

1. Most of the men were being given some form of *training as truck drivers, cooks or grooms for horses.*
2. A Negro had *to be a casualty to be seen as brave.*
3. The great majority of white officers and enlisted men who fought side by side with the Negro *knew the Negro fought better than the white.*

### Communicative Symbols

1. The military did not hide the message that the Negro soldier was second-class.
2. The slurs, jokes, lurid comments were meant *to put fear in the Negro soldier and therefore relegate him to a place of servitude.*

### Structural Symbols

1. *The color barriers of the American military establishment were well known.*
2. *The brass hats in Washington were the discrimination machines to keep the Negro soldier in check.*
3. *Each military division and each military unit was the instrument to carry out Washington's discriminate bidding against the Negro soldier.*

### Personification Symbols

1. *Every step the Negro soldier took toward battle was matched by a step closer to segregation, discrimination and cruelty.*
2. *The Negro was made to feel that every right he sought had to be fought for, yet he was not considered a citizen who could earn the equality of rights.*
3. *The Negro soldier was considered unqualified physically, mentally and morally before being considered fit for military service.*

### Ideational Symbols

1. *There is some suggestion that hate groups will mount a campaign to malign and demean the contribution of the Negro to the war effort.*
2. *We should realize that the Negro, as a successful fighter on the battlefield, should also be a citizen entitled to equal rights on the home front.*
3. *Once men of the military are given to know each other, they become one race of fighting men, so why not become one race of men who respect each other?*
4. *The prejudice that had worked so strongly to deprive one-tenth of our citizens of adequate facilities, training and opportunities in the military is a sign of how our country squanders its most valuable resources, its manpower (Sampson, monograph, 1950).*

## Working with the Maine Branch of NAACP 1946-1962

Question 1. What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?

### Metaphorical Symbols

1. This (country) is *the land of the free*
2. ...*the land of opportunity*
3. ...*the cradle of liberty*
4. ...*the home of democracy*
5. The flag symbolizes *equality and the protection of our civil rights: life, liberty, property, freedom of speech, religion and racial tolerance* (Sampson, speech, 1947a).
6. There is *nothing of value in discrimination and inequality* (Sampson, diary, 1962).

### Physical Symbols

1. *Color defines who you are.*
2. Since when does *color think, feel, or act?* (Sampson, speech, 1947b).
3. Negroes are our *targets for the exercise of abject discrimination*. I believe we want to discriminate, that is *to make the differences*

*between us so apparent that we communicate how superior we think we are* (Sampson, diary, 1962).

### Communicative Symbols

1. What message are we sending when we make color the basis for our sense of moral unity and shared values?
2. What message are we sending our children that *color matters more than what they think?* (Sampson, speech, 1947b).
3. In our books, courts, education, church, places of employment, transportation, hotels, restaurants and government we have *based our practice as citizens on the democracy of race* (Sampson, speech, 1947a).
4. The NAACP's message is a segregated education can never be equal.
5. The NAACP will *instill zeal in the hearts of all those its touches for what an important matter desegregation is* (Sampson, speech, 1948).

### Structural Symbols

1. Since 1909, *the NAACP has been breaking down the devices which have kept the Negro from the rights he has deserved.*
2. *The NAACP stands for the full equality for all citizens.*



3. *The NAACP has engaged Washington and the Presidential Commission on Civil Rights in the hard work and the noble work of restoring democratic, fundamental and God given rights to colored people (Sampson, speech, 1947a).*
4. *The work of the Maine Chapter of the NAACP will touch the heart of this matter with fire (Sampson, speech, 1948).*

#### Personification Symbols

1. *I will be willing to work and sacrifice to change this chapter of our history.*
2. *It is my hope that I can make clear that it is what you do that speaks for you, not your color (Sampson, diary, 1962).*
3. *The organization and the staff of the Maine Branch of the NAACP will pay the price for their work, resolve and self-sacrifice on behalf of colored people. It is my hope that this organization will be known for its riveting obsession to a supreme purpose of civil rights and equality for all (Sampson, speech, 1948).*

#### Ideational Symbols

1. *The essential dignity of all men is based on the inalienable right to freedom (Sampson diary, 1962).*
2. *I hope you agree with me that justice and fair opportunities are the means to these ends.*

3. These ideals are the foundation for the highest laws of the land.
4. We must abolish segregation or reinterpret the Constitution, Bill of Rights and the Bible (Sampson, speech, 1947a).
5. *If color is that all important then we should interpret what white means* (Sampson, speech, 1948).

Question 2: In what context were the symbols manifested?

The context for the symbols expressed by Jean Byers Sampson, during this period of her life, is reflected in her observations of years of discrimination against African Americans. She described the context of her work with the NAACP and the Maine Branch of the NAACP this way:

In 1946, the country was swept by a nauseating wave of lynchings and violence against the Negro. You will remember what happened in Columbia, Tennessee when a Negro mother attempted to have her radio repaired properly. She was slapped and both she and her son were jailed. The city police and state troopers descended upon the Negro section of town. Terrorism reigned. Vandals destroyed Negro businesses. Many of the Negro leaders of the town were arrested. In jail, two Negroes were killed. Of those who remained alive in jail, the NAACP freed all except one and his case is being appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

The world will always remember the case of Isaac Woodard, who was blinded by a policeman after being taken from a bus in Batesburg, South Carolina. The jury would not convict Police Chief Shull, nor would any jury award \$50,000 in damages be given to Woodard. Protests and legal action were in vain. Then there was the blow torch lynching in Minden, Louisiana and the quadruple lynching in Greenville, South Carolina. The NAACP said to the nation, this brutal wave of mob violence must stop. The nation must act, or stand convicted before the world for carrying on in the Nazi tradition.

I imagine all of you have been following the developments in the case of Ada Lois Sipuel, the 23-year-old Negro girl who was refused admittance to the University of Oklahoma in 1948. Rather than accept Miss Sipuel, the University -- in one week -- set up a separate three professor law school for her. Neither Miss Sipuel nor the NAACP is accepting this action. Last Monday, NAACP lawyers presented a writ of mandamus to the Supreme Court to compel the state to open the University law school to Ada Sipuel. Yesterday, six more Negroes applied to four other schools of the University. Will Oklahoma stick to her prejudiced guns and set up separate Negro schools in architecture, sociology, business and music?

In the Sweatt case of 1950, the Supreme Court held that a Negro student had to be admitted to the University of Texas Law School and held that

admitting a Negro to graduate instruction must not afford him different treatment from other students solely because of his race. Finally, on May 17, 1954, the Court unanimously concluded that “in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal had no place. Separate but equal facilities are inherently unequal. From this 1954 decision until the early 1960s not much changed for many segments of the Negro community. The people who benefitted most were college educated middle class Negroes. Negroes without college education, lower-class or inner city was not helped by anybody or anything. They were the subject of persistent inequality (Sampson, speech, 1968).

Godfrey observed:

I think a lot of the elements were wrong during that awful period. It was mostly about a very small Black community trying to have a lot of pull in a mostly White community. For example, here in Maine, we had a meeting to picket Woolworth’s because of job discrimination. About every Black person in Portland was there at the meeting with some Whites, but when we voted to picket only three votes were cast in favor of picketing. Fear was one of our worst enemies (interview, August 1, 2000).

From the 1940s to the 1960s the civil rights movement in Maine paralleled the national civil rights movement historically and politically. As

elsewhere in the country, Maine's Blacks endured and confronted racial discrimination in many areas of society including: employment, housing, education, social and cultural life. During the 1950s, many Whites joined with the Black membership of the NAACP to pressure federal and state governments to pass and enforce civil rights legislation. In Maine, where Blacks comprised less than one percent of the population, Blacks knew they had to bring together Whites and Blacks in a broad-based state movement to confront racism and enforce civil rights. Black and White civil rights activists created and sustained a civil rights movement in Maine through the founding of the Maine Branch of the NAACP in 1947 (Jewell, 1985, p. 58).

Question 3: What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?

I sought the explicit values carried by the symbols realizing that implicit values were inherent in some of the symbols. For example, "Negroes were the mess men, the lowest of the low" is evidence of an implicit discrediting value for prejudice and discrimination. On the other hand, "...that Negro soldiers were single-minded about their patriotism" is evidence of the implicit crediting value of moral unity. The explicit values, therefore, expressed by Jean Byers Sampson during her leadership with the NAACP and the Maine Branch of the NAACP included: freedom, opportunity, liberty, equality, democracy, education, moral unity, shared-values, citizen-centered, dignity, civil rights, law, and respect.

The values carried by metaphorical symbols included:

1. this country is a land of *freedom*
2. the land of *opportunity*
3. the cradle of *liberty*
4. the flag symbolizes *equality* and the protection of our *civil rights*.

The values carried by communicative symbols included :

1. The NAACP's message is segregated education can never *be equal*.
2. What message are we sending when we make color the basis of our sense of moral unity and shared values?

The values carried by structural symbols included:

1. The NAACP stands for the full *equality* for all citizens.
2. The NAACP has engaged Washington and the Presidential Commission on Civil Rights in the hard work and noble work of *democratic*, fundamental and God given *rights* to colored people.

The values carried by personification symbols included:

1. The Negro was made to feel that every *right* he sought had to be fought for, yet he was not considered a *citizen* who could earn the *equality of rights*.

2. It is my hope that this organization will be known for its riveting obsession to a supreme purpose of *civil rights* and *equality* for all.

The values carried by ideational symbols included:

1. We should realize the Negro, a successful fighter on the battlefield, should also be a *citizen* entitled to *equal rights* on the home front.
2. Once men of the military are given to know each other, they become one race of fighting men, so why not become one race of men who *respect* each other.
3. The prejudice that had worked so strongly to deprive one-tenth of our *citizens* of adequate facilities, *education* and training, and *opportunities* in the military are a sign of how our country squanders its most valuable resources, its manpower.
4. These ideals are the foundation for the highest *laws* of the land.
5. The essential *dignity* of all men is based on the inalienable *right to freedom*.

Question 4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

To answer this question, I asked myself:

What was Jean Byers Sampson responding to?

What symbolic and value choices did Jean Byers Sampson make in her communications?

What was Jean Byers Sampson's message?

What audience was Jean Byers Sampson speaking to?

How did Jean Byers Sampson present her message?

What response was Jean Byers Sampson seeking?

Hillary said:

Jean Byers Sampson was responding to the issues of the period of time. Hanging, murder, involuntary servitude and segregated education did run against Jean Byers Sampson's grain. Jean made it a point to let you feel the pain of African Americans. She wanted to speak for those who had no voice and those whose voice was denied to them. Even though Jean was speaking to a particular audience, she addressed all citizens. She wanted everyone to know it was our responsibility to bring about a change in attitude toward racial equality (interview, August 3, 2000).

Jean Byers Sampson utilized all six symbols to express the values of: equality, freedom, liberty and opportunity for African Americans, laws to protect the civil rights of African Americans, a call to citizens for respect, moral unity, shared values and dignity for African Americans. Jean Byers Sampson used the symbols to carry the message that education and a restoration of true democracy among citizens are necessary. Jean Byers Sampson presented her messages through story telling.



Jean Byers Sampson's messages were expressed in her book A Study of the Negro in Military Service and four speeches given to NAACP and Maine Branch NAACP Chapter members, but the intent of her messages were presented in her personal diary. Miller (1966) said, communication has as its central interest those behavioral situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver with conscious intent to affect the latter's behavior. Jean Byers Sampson wrote her intent of response in her diary:

I want them to know they should make no mistake about it. This country cannot exist half slave and half free so it cannot exist half segregated and half desegregated. The Supreme Court can give us the opportunity to achieve greatness, but the moral and spiritual pieces belong to us. I want to challenge them to fulfill the promise of our democracy (Sampson, diary, 1962).

### **Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling: Catalyst 1962-1970**

“The country, democracy and women's needs were at heart of the founding of Catalyst in 1962. I believe that Catalyst's work was really very important. Change was needed before women could be adequately represented in senior management and in the boardroom. Catalyst did break through the glass ceiling in the corporate boardroom,” said Isabelle (interview, August 7, 2000). “In those days, women barely felt the

vaguest yearning to expand their lives for society beyond the exclusive focus of home and family. Catalyst set out to make clear that women were societal and business imperatives. Workplace flexibility and job sharing were part of Catalyst's legacy," Julia said (interview, August 7, 2000).

Jean Byers Sampson founded Catalyst in Education in 1962 and served until 1970. Catalyst in Education was a national organization which assisted college educated women with retraining as teachers to serve the most critical areas of educational need across the country. A document from the earliest days of Catalyst, stated its purpose:

The purpose of Catalyst is to make effective use of the capacities of educated women in the areas of critical personnel shortages. It recognizes the concomitance between the needs of society particularly in the areas of public welfare, public school teaching and science information and the capacity of intelligent women to meet these needs as their family responsibilities decrease (Sampson, private organization report, date unknown).

Jean Byers Sampson wrote:

First, Catalyst will bring to the young woman in college a realistic picture of the shape of her life. We will try to stimulate her to think about it and to plan for it and in particular to realize that her family will occupy only

about a third of the time ahead. Second, Catalyst will work with some 4,500 colleges and universities to motivate women students to become aware of how much more fun and fulfilling life will be if she participates in the world around her. Third, Catalyst will bring education to the woman at home during the family years. To do this, we will encourage the use of many independent aides to study. Four, Catalyst will work to change the attitude of society toward the unemployment of women. There are three million women in our country who hold the B.A. degree and 120,000 who graduate annually who will get to know Catalyst and what it represents.

The editor of the Saturday Evening Post said, “We have in the American woman, one of the nation’s great neglected resources. We have always admired her, pursued her, whistled at her – even enshrined her. Now we will use her skills and abilities, not for the jobs men don’t want to do, but for positions to assist us in the struggle of our democracy (Sampson, speech, date unknown).

1. What of Tierney’s six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership?

The following symbols were identified in pure form from Jean Byers Sampson's written and spoken materials identified through archives, documents and artifacts.

### Metaphorical Symbols

1. A catalyst is *a substance which speeds up a chemical reaction without Itself being changed*. The purpose of this organization is *to speed up the reaction between important jobs which need doing and women of intelligence to do these jobs* (Sampson, speech, 1962).
2. This organization is *so named to serve as an agent for change rather than as a prime mover*. Catalyst is *a dynamic laboratory through which society can foresee the opportunity to tap the unused talents and skills of women*. We are, therefore, *a central clearing house for women who seek help, for institutions able to train them and for schools to employ them* (Sampson, personal communication, 1962).
3. Women must realize that with Catalyst they have the opportunity *to break through the glass ceiling of our culture that has no clear idea of how best to utilize the abilities of women*. *By breaking through this glass ceiling women can give shape to their life and the society of which they are a vital part can benefit* (Sampson, speech, 1967).

## Physical Symbols

1. We are a *clearing house of information*. We are a *national agency*. We are a *reservoir of teachers emphasizing our ability to be a change agent*.
2. Catalyst graduates are *sparks in their communities for new action programs*.
3. Once you have our certificate, you will *be recognized for your unique talents and abilities to teach* (Sampson, personal communication, 1962).
4. ...the use of educational television, programmed instruction, recorded courses and correspondence *to signify the breadth and depth of our educational reach and diversity* (Sampson, interview with New York Times, 1963).

## Communication Symbols

1. Catalyst has prepared and distributed pamphlets *to inform women college graduates of the opportunities available to them and to encourage their participation in fields of significant endeavor; to interpret the objectives, rationale and design of each program; to describe the nature of the work and the need for volunteers and to express the need for new projects in communities where none have been proposed* (Sampson, speech, 1964).

2. I want to put on the board for you two graphs: *the shape of a woman's life vs. the shape of a man's life by hours committed to work. As you will see by this graph, by age 45 women are committed to two hours while men fill this graph at eight hours per day until age 65* (Sampson, speech, 1967).
3. Catalyst is the spokesperson *for any program that can benefit both women and society*. It is not the spokesperson for any particular interest or professional group (Sampson, interview with the New York Times, 1963).

#### Structural Symbols

1. We set up a Board of Advisors to begin *to explore ways and means to bring these women back into professional life* (Sampson, speech, 1964).
2. Our choice of programs was the result of extensive research in areas of critical shortage, part-time work, and areas of opportunity *to utilize the capacities of educated women* (Sampson, speech, 1968).
3. A program director has been hired *to execute Catalyst's fully developed programs that are a model for others* (Sampson, speech, 1963).

## Personification Symbols

1. The leadership group of Catalyst, which is composed of presidents of womens and coeducational colleges, *is one women can have confidence in, one that is clearly identified with the interests, development and expression of women* (Sampson, interview with the New York Times, 1963).
2. *In order to establish its objectives*, Catalyst's leadership has established working relationships with professional authorities in each of the four program areas (Sampson, personal communication, 1962).
3. Educated women are *a prime source of personnel and leadership*. Their *sphere of influence is limitless* (Sampson, speech, 1962).
4. I am an example of *the type of woman for whom this organization was created*. After my graduation from Smith College I worked for the NAACP, married, raised my children and returned to professional work as president and leader of Catalyst (Sampson, speech, 1970).
5. We have established *close working relationships* with the National Education Association of Chief State School Officers and the Maine State Department of Education *to achieve these goals* (Sampson, interview with the New York Times, 1963).

## Ideational Symbols

1. It is the mission of Catalyst *to motivate young women to plan early for the probable future phases of their life, to encourage mature women to maintain and extend their interests and skills in order to make a commitment beyond her home as her children grow; to encourage educational institutions to modify traditional patterns of study and employment to accommodate the needs of educated women with family responsibilities and so to permit them to use their talents and potential for leadership for the benefit of society.*
2. Catalyst came into existence because there is an acute need for personnel in areas such as education, social work and science.
3. We were submerged by letters from women from every state which provided us with *proof of the need for Catalyst.*
4. Catalyst is not duplicated by any other agency on the social and educational scene. It exists *to serve both society's needs and those of women who want to combine family and work harmoniously and successfully.* To achieve this goal, we focus on encouraging and developing educational, training and work programs with built-in flexibility and equal effectiveness (Sampson, personal communication, 1962).
5. The first decision of the leadership of this newly founded organization was *to operate on a national level. We would be a*



*central clearing house for women, for institutions and for regional groups.*

6. In a true sense, *we would serve as a catalyst, speeding up the trend toward better utilization of the skills of women.*
7. By opening the doors of community projects, a great number of mature, educated, dedicated women *as concerned citizens will serve as an invaluable resource for our societal endeavors* (Sampson, interview with the New York Times, 1963).
8. Catalyst will endeavor *to get young women in college to plan for their life; we will work with colleges and universities to help women plan for a life long education; we will offer college educated women the opportunity to benefit society and we will try to change society's attitude toward women.*
9. We will focus our attention *on three million women in our country who hold a bachelors degree, 120,000 who graduate each year and every college and university campus to adopt Catalyst.*
10. You might ask, what has all this to do with me? I do want something from you. *I want you to be aware that a woman's life is complex. I want you to know that if you don't look ahead and plan ahead, no one will do it for you. I want you to be aware of the larger world around you and your participation in it* (Sampson, speech, 1962).

2. In what context were the symbols manifested?

The context for the symbols manifested by Jean Byers Sampson was reflected in the socio-cultural issues of the time. In 1962, “Ms.” was officially accepted by the U.S. government as a designation for either married or unmarried. The Feminine Mystique (1963) legitimized the frustration and anger of women and captured the public’s imagination with its assertion that women are dissatisfied with their confinement and homemaking roles and want something more to do with their lives. Women gain leverage in demanding equal workplace opportunity through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination by employers, employment agencies and labor organizations on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. In 1966, Masters and Johnson’s release of Human Sexual Response validated women’s pleasure in their sexuality. By 1970, women were released from one more aspect of household drudgery with the invention of the disposable diaper. In that year, as well, 50,000 people marched on New York’s Fifth Avenue in the First Annual Women’s Strike for Equality (Eastman Kodak Company, annual report, 1994).

Kathleen interpreted the context in this way:

Well, I don’t remember much about what Jean did with Catalyst, but I can tell you that those of us close to her saw her as a creator of opportunity.

Catalyst was one of her creations. The phrase “the glass ceiling,” meant a fresh beginning for women. It was a promise. It was sweeping in its

focus. Not just some women, but all women. Jean was disconcerted with the values society held for women and what she saw as a real, penetrable glass ceiling for women to break through. It was a win-win for women and society. I guess I could say, Jean wanted to convert everyone to work for our country. I'm sure it was self-actualizing for Jean to live a life of complete service to her country. She experienced more about what democracy is than most of us ever will (interview, August 18, 2000).

Jean Byers Sampson described the context of Catalyst this way:

I'm sure that Smith College contributed a great deal to the feelings I have about myself as a woman. And, I am sure those feelings are the foundation for Catalyst. You know, it never occurred to us in the early 1940s that there were anything less than first-class citizens. The presence of outstanding women on the faculty who were teachers and scholars certainly affected how we perceived ourselves. A lot was expected of us and most of us hoped to be able to fulfill those expectations. It seemed a lot easier to have those expectations at the time, among that group of relatively privileged young women – there was so much less ambiguity about goals and results than there is today. In the 1960s, we saw a renewed interest in increasing women's contributions to the nation's strength and welfare when President Kennedy established the Commission on the Status of Women and when similar commissions were established

in most of the states. However, not many changes in women's status have occurred in the last decade or at least they haven't yet shown up in the statistics.

When we have a higher percentage of women completing high school and college than ever before, why is it that women's goals for achievement in areas outside the home are limited? Why is it that although more women hold jobs in the United States than ever before, the proportion of those in positions of leadership and government and business is not rising and in the professions it is actually diminishing? Assuming that women have more opportunities than ever before and more freedom than they have ever known, how does one explain the limited number of women at the top of every field or the fact that the percentage of women receiving graduate degrees has actually dropped in the past 40 years? I think that the answers can be grouped in three basic reasons that account for the fact that women are not making the contribution to society that they could make. Each reason is related to the other, but each is also distinct.

The first reason involves the domestic and maternal obligations assigned to women. The family base upon which our society rests at present requires that much of the daily work related to the house and the care of children be handed over to women. It has been suggested that men can

perform these tasks as well, but few have shown the eagerness to assume them.

The second reason that I would give for the poor achievement record of women outside their homes is more important than the first. More important than the necessity for women to care for their families is the fact that most women are not interested in assuming equal responsibilities with men. The lack of interest in high-level positions suggests that women are settling for jobs that do not require a great deal of commitment. In the past few years, under the impact of the pressures of sympathetic men and activist women, much-publicized campaigns have been inaugurated to find women for top positions in the Federal government; administrators have been hounded by the White House to upgrade women staff members; honors are bestowed on top-level women; a President's Commission is appointed and labors long to improve the status of women.

The third reason is that society is raising girls and many schools that are educating girls do not expect women to achieve outside the home. This has a tremendous effect on girls' aspiration levels and is a basic cause of women's attitudes. Now, while it is generally agreed by scholars in this field that discrimination against women is fading, it is not fading fast enough to keep up with the changing conditions of home and work. If you will agree with me that changes are needed in society's expectations of

women, then we can face these questions together about what we should do about it.

I am a woman and I was educated in an atmosphere that encouraged women to make significant contributions to society. Society's problems are so great and complex that the skills of each and every one of us are needed to keep our democracy together. There are so many services that need to be provided and so many public decisions that have to be made. Many women are uniquely qualified – in terms of judgement, objectivity and compassion and the availability of time to provide the services and make the judgements. Catalyst is a vehicle for the aspirations of women in this regard (Sampson, speech, 1964).

Lindsay said:

The importance of education in democracy is self-evident in all Jean's thoughts and remarks. Jean said the most important role in the formal education of young people is played by the classroom teacher. Schools needed educated women who had the talent for working with youngsters and the willingness to learn the techniques of teaching. Catalyst was on the frontier of major societal change in the role of women, changes in teaching and learning, changes in corporate culture and changes to bring about further advances in equality and opportunity in democracy. Jean

was behind all of that. Think of where we would be if she wasn't around.

It is hard to say who would have been the catalyst for these changes

(interview, August 9, 2000).

3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?

The values carried explicitly by the symbols of Jean Byers Sampson during her career with Catalyst included: women's aspirations/benefit, societal benefit, opportunity, education, leadership and law.

The values carried by metaphorical symbols included:

1. The purpose of this organization is to speed up the reaction between important jobs which need doing and the *women who have the intelligence* to do these jobs.
2. Catalyst is a dynamic laboratory through which *society can benefit* and foresee the *opportunity* to tap the *unused skills and talents of women*.
3. We are a clearing house for *women who seek help*, for institutions able to *educate* and train them and for schools to employ them.
4. Women must realize that with Catalyst, they have the opportunity to break through the glass ceiling of our culture that has no idea of how best to utilize the abilities of women. By breaking through the glass ceiling, *women can give shape to their life* and *the society of which they are a vital part can benefit*.

The values carried by physical symbols included:

1. Once you have a certificate, you will be recognized for *your unique talents and abilities to teach*.
2. The use of educational television, programmed instruction, recorded courses and correspondence courses signify *the breadth and depth of our educational reach* and program diversity.

The values carried by communicative symbols included:

1. Catalyst has prepared and distributed pamphlets to inform women college graduates of the *opportunities* available to them and to encourage their participation.
2. Catalyst is the spokesperson for any program that can *benefit both women and society*.

The values carried by structural symbols included:

1. We set up a Board of Advisors to begin to explore ways and means to bring *women back into professional life*.
2. Our choice of educational programs was the result of extensive research in areas of critical shortage, part time work and areas of opportunity to utilize the *capacities of educated women*.



The values carried by personification symbols included:

1. The *leadership* group of Catalyst, which is composed of presidents of women's and coeducational colleges, is one women can have confidence in, one that clearly identified with the interests, development and *aspirations of women*.
2. I am an example of the type of woman for whom this organization was created. After my graduation from Smith College I worked for the NAACP, married, raised my children and returned to professional work as president and the *leader* of Catalyst.

The values carried by ideational symbols included:

1. It is the mission of Catalyst to motivate young women to plan early for the possible future phases of their life...to encourage *educational* institutions to modify traditional patterns of study...to accommodate the needs of *educated women with family* responsibilities and so to permit them to use their *talents* and potential for *leadership and for the benefit of society*.
2. The first decision of *leadership* of this newly founded organization was to operate on a national level.
3. By opening the doors of community projects, a great number of mature, *educated, dedicated women as concerned citizens* will serve as an *invaluable resource for societal endeavors*.

4. Catalyst will endeavor to get young women in college to plan for their life. We will work with *higher education* to help women plan for a life long education. We will offer *college educated women the opportunity to benefit society* and we will try to change society's attitude and *laws* toward women's issues.

Question 4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

Reflecting on the founding of Catalyst, Jean Byers Sampson said, "I'm sure that Smith College contributed a great deal to the feelings I have about myself as a woman. And, I am sure those feelings are the foundation for Catalyst." Jean Byers Sampson called the three million women who hold the bachelors degree, "one of the nation's neglected resources." The core of Jean Byers Sampson's response was to encourage women to assume positions in public welfare, public school teaching and science information to "assist us in the struggle of our democracy." Jean saw the war on poverty and segregation coupled with the advent of the women's liberation movement as an opportunity to encourage women into public service and an opportunity for them to take their place in the labor force along side of men.

Jean Byers Sampson presented her message through the use of all six symbols. Metaphorical symbols repetitively carried the message that catalyst was an agent for change, a laboratory for opportunity and a central clearing house for assisting women, institutions and, therefore, society. In ideational terms, Jean Byers Sampson linked the

unused talents and needs of educated women to the potential for new leadership and the benefit of society. Further, she called for a change in societal attitudes toward women and the laws that affect them. Metaphorical symbols and ideational symbols expressed the majority of the values: women's aspirations, societal benefit, education, leadership, democracy and opportunity. Physical, communicative, structural and personification symbols expressed the values of equality for women with men and the freedom of women to chart their own life's course to benefit themselves and society.

Jean Byers Sampson's audience was college educated women, colleges and universities, government officials, corporate officials and men. Jean Byers Sampson's approach to communication was national in scope. In several speeches, letters, proposals, newspaper interviews and in her diary, Jean Byers Sampson recounts the deeply felt feelings she had for individual participation in society and democracy. Jean Byers Sampson sought to encourage, provoke and emotionally induce women to break through the glass ceiling of society to take positions in society which facilitate achieving equality with men and support the fulfillment of democracy. Jean Byers Sampson wrote in her diary (1968), "I want women to be aware of the acute need for their leadership, the larger world around them that beckons their compassion and the opportunities for their participation in it."

Maura observed:

Jean did not like to make public appearances. She did it because she had to. She typed out every word of her speeches and stuck to it. She chose

each word deliberately because she was afraid she'd misstate the message if she did not have it in front of her. Much of her strong language came from the books she read. Her speeches were powerful, insightful and always a reminder of what we were not doing. She often gave the same speech over and over again but somehow she had a new story to tell or a new emphasis to place on her message of education and democracy. She had a way of speaking that made you think of an artist who knows the spaces around objects are as vital to a painting as the objects. With Jean, the silences were as important as breaking the silence (interview, August 10, 2000).

### **Resist or Resign: The University of Maine System Board of Trustees 1965-1985**

While serving on the Maine State Board of Education, Jean Byers Sampson said:

The State Board does not believe that the best answer lies in combining all of Maine's public higher education institutions into one university system with each campus having its own distinction. I believe, however, that this method of coordination could be established through a coordinating board, superimposed above the governing boards of individual institutions. This type of Board which is often called a superboard is the predominant type of board in use throughout the country today. Twenty-one states now have a coordinating board to oversee its public universities. A coordinating

board would be responsible for the development of a master plan which would identify the role of each institution. It would also establish criteria for the establishment of new programs, priorities, and buildings. It would review budgets and make recommendations in these areas to the Governor and the legislature. In effect, the coordinating board would do everything the governing board of the University of Maine would do except it would not administer the day-to-day operation of the institution. At the present time, and always in the past, the local campuses have always been rather the shabby stepsisters of the flag ship university in terms of money and prestige. The longer we delay on voting on this issue to create a Maine University System, the farther and farther we will fall behind the nation (Sampson, speech, 1967).

“The beginning of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees was a struggle. Jean was a powerful voice behind its creation. Little did she know that she would be the first woman chairman some day. Of course, the struggles became greater and one of the most significant crises of her life,” said Nathan (interview, August 13, 2000). Jean Byers Sampson began her service to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees in 1965, assumed the Chair in 1974 and continued her service to the Board until 1985.

1. What of Tierney’s six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson’s leadership?

The following symbols were identified in pure form from Jean Byers Sampson's written and spoken materials identified through archives, documents and artifacts.

### Metaphorical Symbols

1. College is a metaphor for *academic freedom* and leadership is a metaphor for *trust of its main purpose*. There is the danger of academic freedom being subverted by those holding particular sorts of views. Academic freedom is a *general policy and is not arbitrary or flexible*.
2. Academic freedom also means *the right to learn* (Sampson, speech, May 17, 1975).
3. I do not believe the University System Trustees should be dragged into partisan politics but must be preserved as *a forum for the expression of freedom* (Sampson, personal communication, date unknown).
4. Trustees serve an *interpretive role*.
5. Trustees ought to be *the antennae of their institution*, relaying back to it what the surrounding world is like.
6. Trustees serve as *the court of final appeal* for those within the university who have a grievance.
7. Trustees are *the guardians of the public trust*.
8. Trustees were *the primary force* behind assuring representation of student and faculty members on the Board.

9. Trustees were *the impetus and workhorse* behind the defining of and the differentiation in the missions and goals of the seven campuses of the merged university system.
10. Trustees were *the instigators* behind the creation of the Student Affairs Committee of the Board (Sampson, speech, April 30, 1975).

### Physical Symbols

1. The primary purpose of an academic community and its host institution is *the search for truth* (Sampson, personal communication, date unknown).
2. The University *provides educational opportunities* within financial limits set by the legislature and Governor.
3. The University is *fully accountable to the people*.
4. The University's books are *audited to instill trust in our leadership*.
5. As a university responsive to the citizens of Maine we must be *independent and autonomous in the exercise of academic freedom* (Sampson, speech, May 1, 1975).
6. A statewide university system is a *necessary vehicle for making effective use of the state's higher education resources and ensuring that decisions in this area are primarily educational decisions and*

*not legislative or gubernatorial decisions* (Sampson, speech, 1967).

### Communicative Symbols

1. We have the right to tell the people and the legislature *what the budget axing would mean. Full disclosure is the principle here we must advance* (Sampson, interview with the Portland Press Herald, 1975).
2. Let's get a letter out *to other trustees to go along with the legislative budget because there are legislators who will insert money for various purposes in the university budget. Then we could wait for the University's constituents to blame Longley for the cuts and we can begin our campaign of intolerance.*
3. We must be honest and candid in all our communications with our constituents. *We will get more public support if we can clearly drive a wedge between what the Governor said he will cut and what we wish to maintain on behalf of the citizens.*
4. On the other hand, we do not have the right to lobby *to make our point that students must have freedom of speech and assembly* (Sampson, personal communication, 1971).
5. Trustees must serve an interpretive role on this issue. In other words, *we explain the University to the public and convey public sentiment to the University.* We do this through a variety of public



reports through the newspaper, white paper documents and other published material (Sampson, personal communication, 1975).

### Structural Symbols

1. The open forum that we're holding here tonight is part of our effort *to fulfill this interpretive role* (Sampson, speech, April 30, 1975).
2. The University of Maine has a policy of Free Speech passed unanimously by the Board on January 23, 1974. We would be in *violation of federal law and our own policy if we were to deny anyone this basic right* (Sampson, speech, May 1, 1975).
3. All legal decisions in the country have held that *a university could not deny a homosexual group access to university facilities. Our policy and federal law guarantee the right to free speech and assembly* (Sampson, speech, May 17, 1975).

### Personification Symbols

1. *As trustees we must display a spirit of cooperation.*
2. *As trustees we must be fiscally conservative* (Sampson, speech, April 30, 1975).
3. *Education is the most extraordinary instrument of democracy that we have forged over the past 100 years* (Sampson, diary, 1975).

## Ideational Symbols

1. As trustees we have *the right to present the education needs of the citizens of Maine to the legislature* (Sampson, speech, April 30, 1975).
2. Department heads at state *know of our obligations to these students* (Sampson, personal communication, date unknown).
3. It would be wrong for the University *to change its traditional relationship with the legislature just because of this crisis* (Sampson, interview with the Portland Press Herald, 1975).
4. We should *play dumb to any moves the Governor makes and then be outraged* (Sampson, diary, 1975).

## 2. In what context were the symbols manifested?

Osborne described the context of Jean Byers Sampson's symbols this way:

This crisis over the rights of gay and lesbian students was certainly the most directly personal and dramatic of Jean's career. It compressed into two years all of the struggles with those in power and society's values.

This was a personal drama of the highest order. There was Jean, the first female chair of the Board, set to lead others and then everything seemed to move beyond education to confrontation. The students didn't know Jean

and I'm sure Jean didn't know the students, but their lives were juxtaposed in a crisis of moral conscience. A national education group recognized Jean for her leadership. You know, during that whole thing, I never heard one word of contempt from Jean for the Governor despite what he put that board through. Only in her quiet moments could you see on her face the dismay at the savage disparity between the governor's values and the values of a truly democratic society that Jean envisioned (interview, August, 14, 2000).

Paige said:

Mrs. Sampson's greatest characteristic was to be intensely visionary. Her first venture into the NAACP and Catalyst defined a vision of three things: equality for minorities, freedom for women and education. I am reminded of the passage of the eulogy for Lincoln:

There with knowledge of death is walking on one side by me,  
And the thought of death is close walking on the other side of me,  
And I am in the middle as with companions and as holding the hands  
of my companions...

What this emphasizes to me is that to be between knowledge and thought is the question of what is problematic in the meaning of things in life.

Death is just a metaphor here you realize. For Jean, that was civil rights and education. They were companions in her vision (interview, August 14, 2000).

Jean Byers Sampson saw the period this way:

I am honored to have the opportunity to accept the Fourteenth Alexander MeikelJohn Award on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine. The members of the Board are proud of being selected for this honor by an organization that has itself made such an unremitting and courageous effort on behalf of academic freedom over the last sixty years. We are also appreciative of the fact that we were nominated for the award by the Maine A.A.U.P. which although it has sometimes found itself in conflict with the University Board of Trustees on other matters, recognized the importance of the Board's positions on the issues that arose during the past year.

Thornton Wilder once wrote, "Every good and excellent thing, stands by the moment on the razors-edge of danger and must be fought for." The fifteen men and women who comprise the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System have had an ample opportunity to realize the truth of that statement during the past two years, for they have been subjected to an unusual amount of criticism and, at the same time, they

have had to grapple with significant issues that affect the very nature of the University.

The decision permitting the holding of a homosexual conference on a university campus was not an easy one to make. Many strong arguments were presented against permitting this particular group of students freedom of speech and assembly. There is a natural tendency to think of the immediate ill effects of such decisions – the effects on such decisions – the effects on potential benefactors, the legislature and community opinion – rather than amount of freedom of speech and dissemination of ideas on the campuses of the university. One of the most frequently heard pieces of advice during that difficult period was that the Board should deny permission for the conference, knowing that the students would then sue the University and gain the right to hold the conference through legal means. This maneuver was designed to permit the university to escape blame for the conference and win public and legislative support for its stand against the rights of homosexual students. Happily, none of these arguments prevailed and the Board of Trustees after many hours of rational and strenuous discussion reached a unanimous decision reaffirming its previous policy approving the greatest amount of freedom of speech and dissemination of ideas on the campuses of the university.

The decision to refuse to accede to the Governor's call for the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees was not a difficult one to make for the trustees immediately understood the serious harm that would be suffered by the universities if the Board resigned. Each trustee wrote his or her own letter to the Governor describing their reason for refusing to resign and these individual letters indicated a profound understanding of the role a lay Board plays in securing the academic freedom of the campuses.

This decision received widespread support between students and faculty members. It is also important to note that both decisions were strongly supported by the Maine press. Even though the editorial writers often found reasons to criticize university actions, they were universally commendable concerning these decisions. The trustees were immensely heartened by editorials with such titles as, "It Won't Work, Governor" and "Hang in There Trustees."

The newspapers were, I believe, reflective of the Maine culture which has generally welcomed the free exchange of ideas and has generally accepted people with divergent and independent views. Maine people and the Maine legislature have also traditionally recognized that an atmosphere of freedom is essential to their university. When the trustees were deluged with thousands of letters and telephone calls on the homosexual issue and when the Governor called for the Board's resignation, we believed that

these attacks on the basic rights of citizens and on the freedom of the university were not representative of most Maine people. This understanding strengthened our resolve.

I am certain the need for vigilance in the defense of the freedom of colleges and universities will not diminish in the years ahead. American institutions of higher education, have always been vulnerable to the opinions of the community. Increasingly they are encountering pressures of various kinds that impinge on their freedom. There will be a continuing need to defend the academic freedom of teachers and scholars. A cause for which the A.A.U.P. has fought so ably over the years. There will also be an increasing need to protect the university from comparatively new threats to its autonomy, threats that will come in many disguises.

Responsible members of the university community are aware of the need for economy, coordination, efficiency and accountability. The university must be accountable to society and it must be responsive to its needs. It must also operate efficiently and economically. However, at the same time, the university must remain free and autonomous. To retain the university's independence while responding to the wider community's demand for accountability is a complicated task that will require the best efforts of all of us: faculty, administrators and trustees. We must not permit the insistent demands of budget to diminish the role of faculty in academic decisions nor can we permit the need for economy and

coordination to encroach on the essential freedom of the university. Most importantly of all, we must continually strive to educate the public concerning the nature of the university, a concept that is often difficult for persons unfamiliar with a university to grasp. In the years ahead, public understanding or misunderstanding will largely determine the status of the university's freedom.

If I may leave you with this quotation from Adlai Stevenson, "Yes, better we should lose the election than misgovern the people (New York Times, March 14, 1974). I do not believe that a society or an institution can call itself civilized if it is limited to the expression of ideas authorized by some public authority (Sampson, speech, May 20, 1975).

### 3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?

The values carried by the symbols of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees included: academic freedom, leadership, trust, freedom, truth, educational opportunities, accountability, responsibility, citizen-centered, law, rights, honesty, cooperation and democracy.

The values carried by metaphorical symbols included:



1. College is a metaphor for *academic freedom* and *leadership* is a metaphor for *trust* of its main purpose.
2. *Academic freedom* also means the *right to learn*.
3. I do not believe the University of Maine System Trustees should be dragged into partisan politics, but must be preserved as a forum for the expression of *freedom*.
4. Trustees are the guardians of the *public trust*.

The values carried by physical symbols included:

1. The primary purpose of an academic community and its host institution is the search for the *truth*.
2. The University provides *educational opportunities* within financial limits set by the legislature and governor.
3. The University is fully *accountable to the people*.
4. The University's books are audited *to instill trust in our leadership*.
5. As a University *responsive to the citizens* of Maine, we must be independent and autonomous in the exercise of *academic freedom*.

The values carried by communicative symbols included:

1. We must be *honest and candid* in all our communications with our constituents.
2. We must serve a *leadership* role on this issue.

The values carried by structural symbols included:

1. The University of Maine System has a policy of *free speech* passed unanimously by the Board on January 23, 1974. We would be in violation of federal law and our own policy if we were to deny anyone this *basic right*.
2. All legal decisions in the country have held that a university could not deny a homosexual group *access* to university facilities. Our policy and federal law guarantee the *right to free speech and assembly*.

The values carried by personification symbols included:

1. As trustees we must display a spirit of *cooperation*.
2. *Education* is the most extraordinary instrument of *democracy* that we have forged over the past 100 years.

The values carried by ideational symbols included:

1. As trustees we have the right to present *the education needs of the citizens of* Maine to the legislature.
2. Department heads at the state level know of our statutory *responsibility to these students*.

#### 4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

Jean Byers Sampson was responding to the voices of gay and lesbian students and the resulting tensions between the University of Maine System Board of Trustees and the Governor over the students' desire to have freedom of speech and assembly. Jean Byers Sampson relied upon all six symbols to carry three messages. The first message was that trustees should lead with values of accountability, responsibility, truth and trust. The second message concerned the focus of leadership. Jean Byers Sampson thought leadership should be about academic freedom, the right to learn, educational opportunities and student rights. The third message was for education as an instrument of democracy built upon laws of freedom, equality, free speech and the right to free assembly.

Jean Byers Sampson's audience was Maine citizens. Jean Byers Sampson used a series of speeches, newspaper interviews and letters to convey her messages. She sought to influence and evoke an angry response to the governor over the request that trustees resign from the Board. She sought to provoke letters of protest on behalf of the students. Jean Byers Sampson repeatedly returns to a theme of moral unity and moral outrage for the inequality shown to the students. Jean Byers Sampson wrote of these times: "I do not understand why anyone would make it a point to disadvantage some students for making a choice. After all, academic freedom is about learning how to make informed choices. For the Governor to deny us the opportunity to govern and the students the right to speak and assemble is not only illegal it is morally offensive to me" (diary, 1975).

### **Motion With Form: Maine Civil Liberties Union: 1968 - 1993**

It was no surprise that Jean undertook directing the Maine CLU for as long as she did. She was always supportive of the organization. The Maine CLU was a powerful legal entity to get at some of the injustices that plagued society and Jean. It was a slow and painful process to rebuild the Maine CLU after years of financial distress. It had only one lawyer to do all the work. Jean did everything else. Together they put many new cases on the books. Folks in prison had better conditions. Women, minorities, gays and lesbians still had her attention. Indians and Jews were added to her list. For Jean, everyone mattered most (Quentin interview, August 11, 2000).

Rosalind saw Jean Byers Sampson this way:

For Jean, true freedom was liberating. Jean worked at freedom as some of us work at a vocation. She wasn't only in love with the idea of freedom, she was in love with being able to actualize it. Equality and opportunity were equal in Jean's mind I think. With equality you have opportunity. It is fair to say, Jean sought to use her intelligence to ascend the natural processes of our culture at the time. She joined herself to that process again and again. Her refusal to be defeated is a mirror of those who fought along side her and an explanation for this rare woman's leadership. Jean's

life was a metaphor for life really. What I mean is, when you get an insight into her struggle for others and refusal to be defeated, it throws us up against notions of equality and opportunity and as much against ourselves and others (interview, August, 25, 2000).

1. What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?

The following symbols were identified in pure form from Jean Byers Sampson's written and spoken materials identified through archives, documents and artifacts.

#### Metaphorical Symbols

1. I would characterize the Maine Civil Liberties Union, today, *as a blending of those who favor the traditional issues of such as poverty, discrimination and involuntary confinement and those who want to define the issues in a much broader way.*
2. The *arsenal* of the MCLU is *litigation, lobbying and public education*. However, many cases fall *into a grey area in which the application of an accepted principle to a specific situation is unclear* (Sampson, speech, 1980).
3. The MCLU is another name for *Agency for the underdog* (Sampson, interview with the Portland Press Herald, May 6, 1988).

4. All of us are caught up in *an inescapable network of mutuality, tied by a single garment of destiny.*
5. The current leadership for basic human rights *is motion without form.*
6. Freedom, justice and equality are *the lifeblood of our democracy* (Sampson, interview with the Maine Times, October 22, 1993).

#### Physical Symbols

1. The Maine CLU will be a symbol *of moral unity and awareness.*
2. The Maine CLU has paralleled *the progress and growth of its national parent the American Civil Liberties Union.*
3. The Maine CLU took a significant step *when it established its first administrative office* (Sampson, speech, 1971).
4. Although cases of hairstyle expression do not appear on the legal dockets, *we saw eerie battles over artistic expression which we call the "haircut cases."*
5. The number of law suits annually is *an assessment of the degree of civilization in society* (Sampson, speech, 1983).

#### Communicative Symbols

1. Our messages must carry the fact that we have received the endorsement of the Governor and the entire Maine congressional delegation.

2. We took advertisements in the New York Times Review of Books, Rolling Stone and Maine Times *to try to build our membership*.
3. In hindsight, our focus on free expression and the rights of prisoners *brought much critical comment and some loss in membership* (Sampson, speech, 1983).
4. We certainly encourage all citizens to express themselves through letters to the editor, contact with legislators and contact with radio and television stations *on issues of concern to the MCLU* (Sampson, speech, 1975).
5. With the current mood of disillusionment with programs to alleviate society's ills, *it is difficult for anyone to hear what we are saying* (Sampson, diary, 1981).

#### Structural Symbols

1. The MCLU *has been seen as both a strong leader in the effort to recognize minority rights*. And, it has been identified as *the prime villain among those within a "rights industry" that has hampered effective majority government* (Sampson, personal communication, 1981).
2. Despite its lingering financial pressure, the MCLU *has been a centralizing force for all civil rights cases and those whose voice has been subjected to discrimination* (Sampson speech, 1983).

3. The MCLU with the ACLU *has been worthy partners and opponents of Washington's conservative voice* (Sampson, speech 1977).

#### Personification Symbols

1. For a long time, the philosophy of the MCLU *of securing the rights of speech and inquiry, rights of due process and especially, rights of equality before the law* made it difficult to recruit new members. For many years we barely had more than 100 members.
2. The MCLU has been *an effective and decisive force despite its size* (Sampson, interview with the Maine Times, October 22, 1993).
3. There is *only one, single cooperating attorney* in the state and *he is the vehicle for pursuing Maine's civil liberties*.
4. The first executive director *energetically attacked his duties, particularly litigation and fund raising and is credited with the MCLU's growth* (Sampson, speech, 1975).

#### Ideational Symbols

1. Prejudice does exist in Maine against the poor, the Indians, Jews, Blacks and it signifies *the failure of our citizens to honor the democratic principles upon which our country was founded. The remedy in the law is a reminder of those principles* (Sampson, speech, 1983).



2. I think most of us would agree *that a life of high and remote moral aims is essential in providing a person with a life of sense and meaning.* Yet, today, we find it extremely difficult to *maintain any sense of idealism and to keep at the forefront of our minds the beliefs upon which our country was founded.* Instead we are dispirited by cynicism, *by the search for power and prestige and the tendency of political leaders to set their eyes solely on the next election.* Any wonder, *there are those whose voice is not heard and whose rights are violated?* (Sampson, diary, 988).

2. In what context were the symbols manifested?

The context for the symbols expressed by Jean Byers Sampson during her leadership of the Maine Civil Liberties Union was described by Sibyl:

Before the American Civil Liberties Union was founded in 1920, there was no mechanism in place in American society to defend the civil liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. The post World War I period was a time of protest and change. It was also the time of the infamous Palmer raids against aliens and radicals, led by the U.S. Attorney General; a time when the Supreme Court had yet to uphold a single claim of free speech; and a time when racial minorities, women and other disadvantaged groups found almost no legal protection.

Over the years the ACLU founded by Roger Baldwin and other activists became the organization that battled for free speech and the right to protest, for the rights of suspects, prisoners and other unpopular groups and its successful cases set many precedents in the area of constitutional rights. But until the 1960s, another period of protest and change, there was no ACLU affiliate in Maine. In December 1967, Jean Byers Sampson founded the Maine CLU. Twenty people met, responding to a letter which circulated among faculty members of the University of Maine and its law school.

Many of the concerns of the times were the rights of college students to register to vote, haircut and dress codes and roadblock searches of young people going to a folk festival and other concerts. Feminist consciousness brought cases involving help wanted ads classified by sex and a woman's right to resume using her birth name. Gay awareness led to successful defense of the right of students to hold a conference on the campus of the University of Maine which caused Jean Byers Sampson to lead a fight against the Governor and his request that they all resign or he would withhold funding. The Maine CLU also supported legislation that led to the creation of the Maine Human Rights Act and it worked for the modernization of the state's commitment laws. The MCLU also went to court to defend a prisoner's right to a private client-attorney relationship, won a significant case in U.S. District Court involving censorship of a

prisoner's mail and as early as 1971, was investigating a lockup at Maine State Prison that resulted from a peaceful work stoppage. Since then, corrections have become a major concern.

In 1972, the Maine CLU went to court -- successfully -- for a teacher who was fired for discussing the sexual aspects of Romeo and Juliet with her students. Free speech has always been at the heart of the ACLU and the Maine CLU. From them flow political and intellectual freedom. In 1975, we took on reproductive choice in a case against a Maine hospital that required a second opinion for a first-trimester abortion. In the late 1970s, we took on cases dealing with privacy. In the 1980s, we led workshops that informed working women of their legal rights.

Taylor said:

In 1968, Jean founded the MCLU. And in 1977, since no executive director could be found to manage the financially strapped agency, Jean Byers Sampson was asked to help out for a period of five days or so. Jean agreed and ended up staying for five years. It is astonishing that so much was accomplished during her tenure. For an organization with only one or two regular employees, this organization was able to maintain a significant civil liberties presence in the state that was disproportionate to its size and budget. In June 1982, after five financially difficult years, Jean left her

position as Executive Director. One year later, when it appeared that the affiliate would have to cease operations, Jean Byers Sampson again stepped into the breach to direct a successful emergency fund-raising campaign that pulled the MCLU out of its dire situation. During her tenure at the MCLU, Jean Byers Sampson raised the level of visibility of women's rights issues, improvements were made in jail and prison conditions for women and men. Action was taken to curb gender discrimination in employment. Lawsuits were brought on behalf of victims of police abuse and prisoners and students whose speech was censored. Jean Byers Sampson saw it as her duty to do whatever she could to help those wrongly deprived of the rights to which every individual was entitled. Her focus was clearly gender equality and racial equality. In her earlier years, she co-founded "Catalyst" an organization that promoted professional opportunities for women college graduates and later she became the first woman Chair of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees. Her leadership there goes unmatched. How she fought for academic freedom and the rights of gay and lesbian students. I mention these not only to inform you of her achievements, but also to make the point that Jean saw herself as a catalyst. She was a person whose talk, enthusiasm or energy caused others to exert their energies. She lead others in support of good works whether in education, gender and race relations or the protection of civil liberties. In her quiet way, she

endeavored to motivate others to be guided by what they knew was right (interview, August 12, 2000).

Ursula said:

Jean was a fighter for the underdog as she used to say. Jean was an atheist for most of her life and she used to say she was not going to wait for a higher power to move man to do the right thing, she and others would have to do it. Jean was consumed by working for democracy. She saw it as a task that needed to be done. She just couldn't take what was being done to Blacks, Indians, Jews, any minority and women. She thought education could take care of some of it, but leadership from herself and others would be the thing that changed people's lives and, perhaps changed the country. Few, if any, of us could muster the energy and dedication she had for taking care of mankind (interview, August 20, 2000).

Vivian observed:

It was a tentative beginning in 1968, the MCLU struggled and then developed into a statewide organization of more than 1,700 members. We were one of the fastest growing American Civil Unions in the country. We were and still are a multi-dimensional, vital and ambitious

organization with a statewide presence. Thanks to Mrs. Sampson, our mission and financial structure is solid. What we can't thank Jean enough for the legacy she gave us in civil rights, education, law and democracy (interview, August, 13, 2000).

William said:

The fight for civil rights was never over for Jean. In many ways, Jean renewed herself every day to continue fighting for what few of us, in our own selfish ways, hardly ever thought about. Jean cared about all of us, our rights, our freedom all of the time. It was always about the fulfillment of democracy and the dreams our founding fathers and mothers had for our country. This was the symbolic meaning of Jean's life after Smith College. Education, law and equality were the core of her democracy and a civilized society (interview, August 13, 2000).

Jean Byers Sampson said upon her return to the MCLU:

It is incomprehensible to me that the American body politic was fully and explicitly born of freedom, of the free determination of men to be able to live together and work together, and has fought the bitterest battles against each other. Why can't we freely will to live together in peace? What most people want is meaning in their lives (diary, 1977).

3. What values were carried by their symbolic carriers?

The values carried by the symbols expressed by Jean Byers Sampson's leadership of the Maine Civil Liberties Union are: human rights, education, freedom, justice, equality, moral unity, leadership, law and democracy.

The values carried by metaphorical symbols included:

1. Our very name, Maine Civil Liberties Union is a metaphor for the blending of what is now two perspectives: those who favor the traditional issues of poverty, discrimination and involuntary confinement and those who want to define the *civil liberties* issues in a much broader way.
2. The arsenal of the MCLU is *litigation*, lobbying and *public education*.
3. The current leadership for *basic human rights* is motion without form.
4. *Freedom, justice and equality* are the lifeblood of our *democracy*.

The values carried by physical symbols included:

1. The MCLU is a symbol of *moral unity* and awareness. The number of *law suits* annually is an assessment of the degree of civilization in Maine and society.

The values carried by communicative symbols included:

1. Our messages to the *citizens* of Maine must carry the fact that we have received the endorsement of the Governor and the entire Maine Congressional delegation.
2. In hindsight, our focus on *free expression* and the *rights* of prisoners brought much critical comment and some loss in membership.
3. We encourage all *citizens to express themselves* through letters to the editor, contact with legislators and contact with radio and television on issues of concern to the MCLU.

The values carried by structural symbols included:

1. The MCLU has been seen as both a strong *leader* in the efforts to recognize minority rights and the villain among those within the rights industry that have hampered effective majority government.
2. Despite its lingering financial pressures, the MCLU has been a centralizing force for all *civil rights* and those who have been subjected to abject discrimination.



The values carried by personification symbols included:

1. For a long time, the philosophy of the MCLU of securing the rights of free speech, inquiry, due process and, especially, rights of equality before the made it difficult to recruit new members.
2. There is only one, single cooperating attorney in the state and he is the vehicle for pursuing Maine's *civil liberties*.

The values carried by ideational symbols included:

1. Prejudice does exist in Maine against the poor, Indians, Jews, and Blacks particularly and it signifies the failure of our citizens to honor the democratic *principles* upon which our country was founded. The remedy in the *law* is a reminder that those principles must be safeguarded.
2. I think most of us would agree that a life of high and remote *moral aims* is essential in providing a person with a life of sense and meaning.
3. We are dispirited by cynicism, by the search for power and the tendency political leaders to set their eyes solely on the next election. Any wonder, there are those whose *voice* is not heard and whose *rights* are violated?

#### 4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

Jean Byers Sampson was responding to what she saw as incomprehensible that the “American body politic was not fully and explicitly born of freedom, or the lack of determination of men to live and work together at a common task. Why can they not then live together in peace?” she asked herself (diary, 1977). Minority rights, women’s rights, civil and human rights, freedom, equality, liberty, justice, fairness, trust, dignity and respect for all human beings, a subscription to law and the fulfillment of democracy all found its way into the Jean Byers Sampson’s communication as head of the MCLU.

Jean Byers Sampson discovered that there were many more unheard voices in society when she took over the leadership of the Maine Civil Liberties Union. “The struggle of the Negro,” she would write. “...was like an attack by the forces of ignorance, prejudice and intolerance all at once.” Jean Byers Sampson perceived “Black Americans are like a natural object of societal emanations and of a sensed impotence. Urban culture was a lottery with big winners and even bigger losers. Black Americans were the losers. Racism is an anathema to conscience and why not everyone else’s” (diary, 1981).

Jean Byers Sampson relied on all six symbols to convey her message. The symbols carried the messages that litigation, education and lobbying were the triad of weapons in the fight for civil rights. The current leadership of the country was not doing enough to protect civil rights. Civil rights, freedom, justice and equality are the foundational values of democracy. Further, the Maine Civil Liberties Union would be a

symbol of moral unity, a leader in the fight for civil rights and a centralizing force for all those whose voices had been denied them.

Jean Byers Sampson's audience was all citizens, yet her intent was to raise everyone's awareness, to educate, to influence opinions, and to prod citizens to get involved and become members of the MCLU. Jean Byers Sampson wrote in her diary, "What most people want, I am sure, is meaning in their lives. If only they could realize that public service is the highest form of civilized participation in our democracy. The politicians, government officials and CEOs need to know that those involved in public service are the peace makers, the equalizers, the visionaries for rights and freedoms, the true inheritors of the legacy of democracy" (diary, 1988).

### **Summary**

Qualitative case studies allow researchers the opportunity to study phenomena in context and for exploring relations among phenomena (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Yin (1984) said the case study is an appropriate design in exploratory research where the case represents a critical test of existing theory. The leadership life of Jean Byers Sampson represented a critical case for studying the symbols of leadership. Tierney's (1989) theory of symbolic leadership emphasizes the need to study the symbols of leadership and the context in which symbolic leadership resides. Tierney's six symbolic categories were synthesized through four research questions and archived, document, artifact and interview data to be able to explore the full depth of context and the variety of evidence.

The findings were:

1. An important part of the meaning of Jean Byers Sampson's symbols and values of leadership was derived from the larger context in which the symbols were used.
2. Jean Byers Sampson's leadership symbols and values were likely to recur when similar contextual conditions arose.
3. Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbols and values in leadership were meant to induce action or agreement in others.
4. From the evidence gathered around Jean Byers Sampson's leadership, Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership is supported.

Six symbolic categories: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational, identified by Tierney (1989) were found to exist in the data. The symbols were embedded in the context of Jean Byers Sampson's five leadership positions: with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, with the Maine Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, with Catalyst, with the University of Maine System Board of Trustees and with the Maine Civil Liberties Union. Each position could be characterized as a challenge to or a crisis for leadership. The civil and human rights of African Americans; respect and equal rights for women; free speech and assembly, equal rights for gay and lesbian students; and free speech, civil and human rights for disadvantaged people were the logos of Jean Byers Sampson's life. The findings from 23 interviews indicate that the

context provided meaning to the symbols which were derived from the context in which they were embedded.

For example, the findings indicated the six symbols appeared in each leadership position to articulate the values of democracy, equality, freedom, opportunity, education and the law. In total 26 values were identified. The values recurred with their symbolic carriers more than 250 times in the data. Further, the symbols and values recurred with the similarity of contextual condition which arose. That is, the symbols and values were distributed evenly through each of the five contexts and could be said to be companions of or to influence each other. The symbols and values were communicated through speeches Jean Byers Sampson gave, interviews held with her, a personal diary of reflection, letters and other personal communications Jean Byers Sampson had with people. The statements Jean Byers Sampson utilized invited, influenced, challenged and motivated her audience to participate in the fulfillment of democracy through the guarantee of equality, rights, and opportunity for all people. This study supports the chain of symbolic evidence from scholars Gorgias to Tierney and makes a contribution to the advancement of leadership and symbolic knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 5: Interpretation, Significance and Discussion**

### **An Overview of the Case Study**

#### The Problem

A review of the literature, for this study, has revealed there are a variety of theoretical and non-theoretical perspectives of leadership, yet the dimensions and a definition of leadership remain unclear. The University Council for Educational Administration (1994) said, that while it was not possible from their research, to reach a consensus of definition of leadership, one scholarly vantage point would be to look at the symbols of leadership. Wuthnow (1992) said, the realm of values and symbols of language is of scholarly importance to understanding the human condition and is a reality that can be subjected to systematic investigation.

Tierney (1989) theorized, leadership is defined by the symbols which express the meaning of things. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) said, we need to know about the life of one person in order to understand something as complex as leadership. A review of the literature of symbolism revealed the problem was to understand: what are the symbolic forms and contextual surroundings of symbols? The purpose of this study, therefore, was to utilize Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership to explore the symbolic dimensions and the contextual surroundings of leadership, in order to provide scholars with a deeper

understanding of symbolic leadership and to make a contribution to the advancement of leadership and symbolic knowledge.

### **The Research Questions**

Therefore, this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What of Tierney's six symbolic categories was manifested in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership?
2. In what context were the symbols manifested?
3. What values were carried by the symbols?
4. How did Jean Byers Sampson communicate the symbols?

### **Method**

Case studies allow an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Schramm (1971) said the case study contributes uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social and political events. Within the various types of qualitative design, I chose the case study method for its unique strength to deal with a full depth of context and a variety of evidence available from: archival information, documents, physical artifacts, and interviews. Yin (1984) said the single case-study is an appropriate design for exploratory research where the case represents a critical test of existing theory. The case of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic

leadership during times of organizational crises was a critical case for testing Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership.

I was the researcher in this study. I examined archival information, documents and physical artifacts. I made observations, reviewed field notes and kept a personal journal. I audio taped 23 interviews with former colleagues, friends and relatives of Jean Byers Sampson. The data was coded as it was received. The categories included: (a) the symbols manifested, (b) the context for symbolic expression, (c) the values expressed, (d) the communication process for expressing the symbols, (e) the data sources utilized, (f) the pattern codes reflected. I examined, categorized, tabulated or otherwise recombined the evidence and engaged in iterative reflection to address the research questions. I synthesized Tierney's six symbolic categories through the data. Patterns of symbols and values, and themes of symbolic meaning, were identified from matrices constructed from coded data. To link data to interpretation, I identified data in its pure form. The data was paired with Tierney's theoretical perspective. Validation of the data was achieved through a triangulation of methods comparing archival records, documents, physical artifacts and interviews. I then sought to go beyond the data and locate the meaning of the symbols in an explanatory and an interpretive framework. The final step was to write the case study narrative.



## The Findings

1. An important part of the meaning of Jean Byers Sampson's symbols of leadership, was derived from the larger context in which the symbols were used.
2. Jean Byers Sampson's leadership symbols and values carried by the symbols were likely to recur when similar contextual conditions arose.
3. Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbols and values in leadership were meant to induce action or agreement in others.
4. From the evidence gathered around Jean Byers Sampson's leadership, Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership is supported.

## Discussion of the Findings

1. An important part of the meaning of the symbols of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership was derived from the larger context in which the symbols were used.

The stress of the language, expressed by Jean Byers Sampson, in A Study of the Negro in Military Service, through the use of the metaphorical symbols: *lowest of the low*, *fight for the right to fight*, and *push his way into battle* contributed, sustained, interpreted, and brought meaning and emphasis to what Jean Byers Sampson sought to place on the issues of prejudice, segregation, humiliation, degradation, the struggle and

the sacrifice of African American soldiers in World War II. Jean Byers Sampson's emphasis echoed in the repetitive use of the words: *low - low; fight - fight*, and in the phrase *push his way into battle - to be pulled from it*. You can feel Jean Byers Sampson's consternation in each line, especially in the personification symbol: *Every step the Negro soldier took toward battle was matched by a step closer to segregation, discrimination and cruelty* or in the communicative symbols: *The military did not hide the message that the Negro soldier was second class...and...the slurs, jokes and lurid comments were meant to put fear in the Negro soldier*. You can feel her compassion in the physical symbol: *A Negro had to be a casualty to be seen as brave...and...Negroes were 3,200 casualties*.

Jean Byers Sampson's words of compassion, feeling, care and concern for the soldiers, harmonized with the acts of segregation, prejudice and discrimination, shown by the military and are embedded together in the context of the war. Further, the words, paralleled the context for the struggle of African Americans in American culture at the time. Jean Byers Sampson's explicit description of segregation, prejudice, discrimination, cruelty and murder toward African Americans and the manner she showed for balancing the cry for equality, freedom, justice and societal benefit are, again, one. On the one hand, Jean Byers Sampson convened our indignation and sense of moral outrage for the African American soldier and invited us and even goaded us to rethink *how our country squanders its most valuable resources, its manpower*. She implored us, through a duality of argument, to *realize that the Negro, as a successful fighter on the battlefield, should also be a citizen entitled to equal rights on the home front*. It is

incredulous to Jean Byers Sampson that man's inhumanity to man could be so evident and pervasive without some moral questioning of why? She would ask herself: *Racism is an anathema to my conscience so why not everyone else's?*

Having written A Study of the Negro in Military Service and while working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Jean Byers Sampson founded the Maine Branch of the National Association of Colored People. During that period of time, the struggle for equal rights to overcome discrimination, segregation and prejudice was emerging in America. Jean Byers Sampson established the Maine Branch of the NAACP because she saw *the enforced segregation of any group of people (was) in direct denial of the principles upon which our government and democracy were based.* Jean Byers Sampson used the metaphors: *land of the free, land of opportunity, the cradle of liberty, home of democracy* and the value words *equality* and *democracy* to encourage her audiences toward mutually shared-values. As with the African American soldier, Jean Byers Sampson sought to remind us that the fundamental values of democracy have not been fulfilled and that we have an obligation to fulfill it: *We... cannot be content to profess the belief (equality) and practice another (inequality) and In our books, courts, education, churches, places of employment, transportation, hotels, restaurants and government we have based our practice as citizens on the democracy of race.* Jean Byers Sampson said. The metaphors and values statements were necessary to the overall meaning in the discrediting line: *there is nothing of value in discrimination and inequality.*

There is stressful language evident, as well, in Jean Byers Sampson's use of the physical symbol of *color*. *Color* is repeated for emphasis: *Color defines who you are. Since when does color think, feel or act? If color is all that important than we should reinterpret what white means.* Jean Byers Sampson draws us to a moral question, in the communicative symbols, in an attempt to deal with the troubling aspect of color and its connection to children: *What message are we sending our children that color matters more than what they think?...or in the question: What message are we sending when we make color the basis for our sense of moral unity and shared values?* Jean Byers Sampson duality of argument links the idea of a....*reinterpretation of color* to a *reinterpretation of the Constitution, Bill of Rights and the Bible* in an effort to evoke outrage in us. Similarly, Jean Byers Sampson's expression of the metaphors for the values of *freedom, opportunity, liberty, democracy and rights* with issues of *discrimination, prejudice and inequality* set up symbolic opposites which compel a sense of indignation and hope and convenes our intellectual participation in Jean Byers Sampson's suggestion...*I hope you agree with me that justice and fair opportunity is the means to these ends.* From her diary, Jean Byers Sampson wrote, *I want them to know they should make no mistake about it. The country cannot be half slave and half free. I want to challenge them (citizens) to fulfill the promise of democracy.*

Without leaving the Maine Branch of the NAACP, Jean Byers Sampson turned her attention to women's equality, rights and opportunities at a time when the women's liberation movement was beginning to emerge in America. In 1962, Jean Byers Sampson founded Catalyst, an educational organization for college educated women. A larger

contextual influence is evident here as Jean Byers Sampson links her Smith College experiences with her feelings as a woman and the founder of Catalyst: *I'm sure that Smith College contributed a great deal to the feelings I have about myself as a woman. I'm sure those feelings are the foundation for Catalyst.* In addition, Jean Byers Sampson commingled segregation, the war on poverty and the women's liberation movement in the idea that women should take their place in *assuming positions in public welfare, public school teaching and science to assist us in the struggles of democracy.* From her beginnings at the NAACP, Jean Byers Sampson focused on societal benefit and the role of leadership to bring about societal benefit. In the line: *It is the mission of Catalyst to motivate young women to plan early in their life for the possible future phases of their life and to use their talents and potential for leadership for the benefit of society...* expressed the duality of meaning first, for the women's movement forward in society and, second, for women's leadership to benefit society. From Jean Byers Sampson's perspective, *the culture has no idea how best to utilize the abilities of women. By breaking through the glass ceiling women can shape their life and the society of which they are a vital part.*

With the founding of Catalyst, Jean Byers Sampson articulated the values, moral standards, aspirations and beliefs of the organization. Utilizing herself as a model, she hoped these values would be mutually shared by all women. In the personification symbol, the lines: *I am an example of the type of woman for whom this organization was created. I am a woman and I was educated in an atmosphere that encouraged women to make a significant contribution to society. Society's problems are so great and complex that the skills of each and every one of us (women) are needed to keep our democracy*

*together. Many women are uniquely qualified in terms of judgement, objectivity and compassion and the availability of time to provide the services and make the judgements. Catalyst is the vehicle for the aspirations of women* are symbolic aspects of Jean Byers Sampson's language to build a case for women's participation in society. To prod and influence women forward, Jean Byers Sampson invites women with the provocation: *You might ask, what has all this to do with me? I do want something from you. I want you to be aware that a woman's life is complex. I want you to know that if you don't look ahead, no one will do it for you. I want you to be aware of the larger world around you and your participation in it. If you will agree that changes are needed in society's expectations for women, then we can face these questions together about what we should do about it.* While it matters to Jean Byers Sampson what women choose to do, it is the higher order instrumental aspects of life, that of service to society and commitment to democracy that brings meaning to Jean Byers Sampson's choice of the symbols for Catalyst.

By the time Jean Byers Sampson becomes the first female Chair of the University of Maine Board of Trustees in 1974, her commitments to freedom and equality are the logos of her thoughts and public comments. Jean Byers Sampson was asked to lead the University of Maine Board of Trustees at a time when gay and lesbian students were organizing and gaining visibility on Maine's public university campuses. The Governor had voiced his opposition to gay and lesbian student organizations. The University of Maine System Board of Trustees voted unanimously to allow students to meet. Outraged at the Board's decision, the Governor asked the Board to resign. If they did not resign, he

vowed he would not seek state funding for those campuses which permitted gay and lesbian students to meet. This was a seminal moment in Jean Byers Sampson's leadership life. All the values Jean Byers Sampson held closely from the beginning of her civil rights career come together in this crisis of the moment. Issues of academic freedom, freedom, liberty, democracy, opportunity, education, law, justice, fairness, dignity, respect, trust, shared values, moral unity, societal benefit, civil and human rights, responsibility, accountability and truth come together in this time of intellectual challenge and crisis. For Jean Byers Sampson, those who have had no voice in societal and those who have been denied a voice coalesce in gay and lesbian students.

The recurrence of the value terms: freedom, equality, democracy, opportunity, responsibility, accountability, public trust and leadership reinforce and bring meaning to the metaphors: *College is a metaphor for academic freedom and leadership is a metaphor of trust of its main purpose. There is the danger of academic freedom being subverted by those holding particular sorts of views...academic freedom is a general policy and is not arbitrary or flexible.* Jean Byers Sampson's moral outrage, over the Governor's request for the Board to resign, is masked by the metaphors she chooses to define freedom and trusteeship. Sampson refers to freedom as academic freedom and broadens it to include: *freedom from the tyranny of the Governor... freedom for the students to be together and freedom to learn, assemble and speak, freedom to serve the trustee role as representatives accountable to the citizens of the state.* With repetitive emphasis, Jean Byers Sampson said in metaphorical terms: *trustees serve an interpretive role, trustees ought to be the antennae for of their institutions, trustees serve as the final court of*

*appeal, trustees are the guardians of the public trust, trustees are the impetus and the workhorse for the university trustees are the instigators for student representation and primary force for students and faculty. For Jean Byers Sampson, trusteeship meant leadership and leadership meant earning the public trust, accountability, serving an interpretive role between the university and the public and, conversely, between the public and the university. For Jean Byers Sampson, leadership is not a position, it is a set of value choices. Jean Byers Sampson said, Our choice as leaders is to either resist this encroachment to academic freedom or resign. Jean Byers Sampson sought to convene an attitude of... vigilance in the defense of freedom and against, new threats to its autonomy. In Jean Byers Sampson's thoughts and speech, Education is the most extraordinary instrument of democracy that we have forged over the past 100 years. Jean Byers Sampson reaches back to the great works of literature which were the foundation of her intellectual life and, paraphrasing Thornton Wilder, said...this was a good thing, in this moment of crisis and danger, which must be fought for.*

Jean Byers Sampson preferred to think the public did not think deep thoughts about education, freedom, democracy, civil and human rights: *Most importantly of all, we must continually strive to educate the public concerning the nature of the university, a concept that is often difficult for persons unfamiliar with a university to grasp.* On the other hand, she did believe citizens could be educated. She said, *I hope you will agree with me that a society or an institution cannot call itself civilized if it limits the expression of ideas.* Jean Byers Sampson did seek to evoke an angry response to the Governor: *Let's get a letter out to other trustees to go along with the Legislative budget*



*because there are legislators who will insert money for various purposes. Then we could wait for the University's constituents to blame the Governor for the cuts and we can begin our campaign of intolerance.* For Jean Byers Sampson, the leadership choices were clear. The attacks on the basic rights of student citizens and on the freedoms of the university and its trustees... *were not representative of her beliefs or those of most Maine people.* This understanding strengthened Jean Byers Sampson's... *resolve to lead rather than resign* and convene the citizens of Maine to resist the Governor's challenges.

Having won the American Association for University Professors Andrew J. Meikeljohn Award for a defense of academic freedom in crisis, Jean Byers Sampson was asked to step into lead a financially strapped Maine Civil Liberties Union which she had helped found years earlier. Jean Byers Sampson faced her fifth intellectual challenge and crisis. Metaphorically Jean Byers Sampson referred to the MCLU as the *Agency for the Underdog*. This metaphor defined the organization's support for women's rights, improvements in jails and conditions for men and women in prison, and legal action against those who would discriminate on the basis of gender, color, religion and ethnicity. Jean Byers Sampson said, *The arsenal of the MCLU is litigation, lobbying and public education.* For Jean Byers Sampson, *law and education* were the cornerstones of democracy and a civilized society. *Freedom, justice and equality* were the lifeblood of democracy.

Jean Byers Sampson said the current leadership of the country for basic human rights was *motion without form* and the message of *civil rights* was not getting through.

*With the current mood of disillusionment with programs ' to alleviate society's ills, it is difficult for anyone to hear what we are saying. Jean Sampson Byers said, the MCLU would be a symbol for moral unity and awareness. While there was a substantial history of prejudice against the poor, Indians, Jews and Blacks in Maine, Jean Byers Sampson's observation was about... the failure of our citizens to honor the democratic principles upon which our country was founded. Jean Byers Sampson's response to society's and leadership's failure is embedded in the structural symbol: The remedy in the law is a reminder of those principles. Jean Byers Sampson was not going to rely only on the law to move citizens to do what was right. She preferred to believe that citizens would agree that a life of high and remote moral aims are essential in providing a person with a life of sense and meaning.*

Jean Byers Sampson's desire to convene citizen attention and influence a sense of community, around democratic values, is sensed in the words: *All of us are caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied by a single garment of destiny.* Jean Byers Sampson actively sought *all citizens to express themselves through letters to the editor, contact with legislators, radio and television on issues of concern to the MCLU.* Taylor said of Jean Byers Sampson...*In a quiet way, she endeavored to motivate others to be guided by what they knew was right.*

2. Jean Byers Sampson's leadership symbols and values were likely to recur when similar contextual conditions arose.

Jean Byers Sampson journeyed through five intellectual challenges. During each challenge, all six symbols: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational appeared and recurred within each context. The first challenge was the decision to go to work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and write the history of the Negro soldier in World War II. The second challenge was to speak for Negroes in Maine at a time of active discrimination. Jean Byers Sampson said, *I so often wanted to tell people I worked for an insurance company, but I could not bring myself to do it.* The third challenge was to encourage the culture to respect the abilities and rights of women at a time when the women's liberation movement was just beginning. The fourth challenge was to resist the Governor's request for University of Maine System Board of Trustees to resign for speaking for gay and lesbian students. The fifth was to speak for the poor, women, minorities, Indians, Jews and those in prison. The challenges were also a crisis for Jean Byers Sampson. On the one hand, the crises were a challenge to convene a national or statewide audiences for her messages and, on the other, they were an intellectual crisis which caused Jean Byers Sampson to bring forward from her life the symbols and values which expressed the values of freedom, democracy, education, civil and human rights in the broader context of meaning which for Jean Byers Sampson were recurring themes of unfulfilled democracy. In her diary, Jean Byers Sampson asked: *It's a question of what has been done? What still needs to be done? What has changed to bring us to this point of discrimination, segregation, prejudice and inequality? How do we fulfill the promise of democracy?*

Each of Tierney's six symbols was evident. The symbols recurred 151 times in the data. Metaphorical and ideational symbols recurred most frequently. Physical, structural, communicative and personification symbols recurred continuously but with somewhat less frequency because there were no dominant physical or structural symbols during the earliest beginnings of Jean Byers Sampson's career. In addition, Jean Byers Sampson preferred to speak and write about individual values. She did not actively publish. She rarely gave interviews. Further, Jean Byers Sampson preferred to work alone. For Jean Byers Sampson, the physical, structural, communicative and personification symbols were not the primary symbolic carriers of values and meanings. Metaphorical and ideational symbols and the values carried by the symbols were the logos of her experience. Jean Byers Sampson was endeavoring to influence the culture toward values of: equality, freedom opportunity for minorities, respect for women's abilities, tolerance and inclusion for gays and lesbians and away from segregation and prejudice, indifference, intolerance and inequity.

Twenty-six values were carried on the symbols and recurred more than 250 times during the crises. Of these, nine values expressed themselves as a pattern carried through all six symbols: equality, freedom, opportunity, democracy, law, citizen-centered, leadership, education, civil and human rights. I agreed with Tierney that by no means did the symbols fall exclusively within the six categories. On the other hand, the values were spread across the symbols. It could be said that the symbols and values appeared to overlap and influence each other and this implication could be an issue for future

research. It is from this pattern of symbols and values that I determined that Jean Byers Sampson's life echoed three themes:

1. Teachers should speak for those who have no voice in society.
2. Education and law are the foundation for a civilized and democratic society.
3. It is every citizen's responsibility to work for the fulfillment of democracy.

Upon reflection of the matrices, the themes were relational. Jean Byers Sampson said *Teachers should and must help their students escape from the confinement of self and the artificial restrictions society placed on them.* Jean Byers Sampson saw education and law as *...working to solve American problems and improving society.* Citizen involvement in fulfillment of democracy, therefore, was an outgrowth of education and subscription to the law. Jean Byers Sampson said *Man creates society. He is not created by society. On the one hand, there is no limit to his potential for evolutionary change and on the other, he has the capacity to discipline himself to the hard tasks of change* (diary, 1990). It is my opinion, Jean Byers Sampson had every confidence that some understanding and experience thinking about moral and ethical problems are a function of an educated, informed judgment which enables an individual to make discriminating moral choices in matters of equality, freedom and democracy. Further, it facilitates the reason for the finding that Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbols and values were meant to induce action or agreement to education and informed judgement in others.

3. Jean Byers Sampson's use of symbols and values were meant to induce action or agreement in others.

With each of five positions held Jean Byers Sampson sought to move a wide audience to action or agreement. With the NAACP she said, *We must rethink about how our country squanders its most valuable resource, its manpower. We should realize that the Negro as a successful fighter on the battlefield should also be a citizen entitled to equal rights on the home front.* With the Maine Branch of the NAACP, she said, *I want them to know they should make no mistake about it. The country cannot be half slave and half free. I want to challenge them (citizens) to fulfill the promise of democracy. I hope you agree with me that justice and fair opportunity is the means to these ends.*

As the founder of Catalyst, Jean Byers Sampson said, *It is the mission of Catalyst to motivate young women to plan early in their life for the possible future phases of their life and to use their talents and potential for leadership for the benefit of society. You might ask what has all of this to do with me? I do want something from you. I want you to be aware that a woman's life is complex. I want you to know that if you don't look ahead, no one will do it for you. I want you to be aware of the larger world around you and your participation in it. If you will agree that changes are needed in society for women, then we can face these questions together about what we should do about it.*

As Chair of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, Jean Byers Sampson said, *I hope you agree with me that a society or institution cannot call itself*

*civilized if it limits the expression of ideas. We need vigilance in the defense of freedom and against new threats to its autonomy. Lastly, as the founder of the Maine Civil Liberties Union, Jean Byers Sampson said, All citizens should express themselves in letters to the editor, contact with legislators, radio and television on issues of concern for the MCLU. We would agree that a life of high and remote moral aims are essential in providing a person with a life of sense and meaning. All of us are caught up in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied by a single garment of destiny.*

The words, *We must rethink..., I hope you agree..., I want them to know..., I want to challenge them..., I want to motivate you..., I want you to be aware..., I want you to know..., If you will agree with me..., We need vigilance..., All citizens should express themselves., We would agree..., and All of us are caught up...* are statements inviting, influencing, challenging, motivating, prodding, evoking or otherwise inducing others to action or agreement.

4. From the evidence gathered around Jean Byers Sampson's leadership, Tierney's theory of symbolic leadership is supported.

Tierney said symbols are strategies for understanding and acting in the organizational world. Therefore, the need exists to understand the context in which symbols function and the way leaders use symbols to create and interpret organizational reality. To adequately understand how leaders make sense of the organizational universe, it is important to deconstruct the underlying conceptual and ideological orientations

presidents bring to their leadership roles and contexts. Tierney collected interview data from a national sample of thirty-two college and university presidents and disaggregated the data for comments that were symbolic in nature. He disaggregated the data into six categories: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational. Tierney theorized that symbols help define leadership. He concluded that researchers should explore the symbolic manifestations and context of organizational life and leadership.

From the research and data gathered, I deconstructed the underlying conceptual and ideological orientation's that Jean Byers Sampson brought to her leadership. I inspected the data gathered from archival resources, documents and artifacts for comments that were symbolic in nature. I disaggregated the data into Tierney's six categories: metaphorical, physical, communicative, structural, personification and ideational. I found evidence of all six symbols. The symbols recurred 151 times in the data. Of this total, 38 were metaphorical symbols and 29 were ideational symbols. Twenty-four physical and 22 personification symbols were located. Twenty communicative and 17 structural symbols were located as well, thereby confirming the existence of the six symbolic categories identified by Tierney.

Further, 26 values were carried by the symbols, explicitly and implicitly, more than 250 times in the data. The values were identified as: equality, freedom, liberty, opportunity, democracy, civility, dignity, respect, fairness, compassion, trust, tolerance, justice, law, community service, moral unity, shared values, citizen-centered, education,



societal benefit, leadership, women's aspirations, accountability, responsibility, integrity, civil and human rights and truth. Equality, freedom, liberty, democracy, law, citizen-centered, education, societal benefit, leadership, accountability, responsibility, civil and human rights were explicitly or implicitly expressed 10 or more times each in the data. Opportunity, civility, dignity, respect, fairness, compassion, trust, justice, tolerance community service, moral unity, shared values, women's aspirations, women's benefits and truth were carried explicitly and implicitly, but less frequently in data available.

The meanings of the symbols were embedded in context. Of the total, 104, were utilized to express the struggle of African Americans, women, gay men, lesbians, the poor and those imprisoned. Forty-seven symbols were utilized to explain the functioning of the organizations: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Maine Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Catalyst, the University of Maine System Board of Trustees and the Maine Civil Liberties Union. Tierney said symbols embedded in context are strategies for helping organizational participants make sense of the organization. I would add that, from the data gathered, the symbols and symbolic context were also used to describe and bring meaning to the time of the life of the leader and the participants. From these results, I can confirm the existence of Tierney's symbolic categories and support the role that symbolic context plays in the life of a leader. It would be appropriate therefore only to generalize to Tierney's theory, that symbols help to define leadership.

## **The Significance of the Findings for Symbolic Leadership**

### 1. The Chain of Symbolic Evidence

This study provides evidence for a contribution to the chain of evidence of both symbolic theory and symbolic leadership theory. Gorgias (5 B.C.) theorized that humans know through their senses and possess knowledge symbolically. Plato (3 B.C.) commenting on Gorgias, hypothesized that we may learn from the lives and the role values play in those lives. Herder (1784) said human speech is symbolic. Cassirer (1923) conceived of the term symbolic form to refer to the totality of all that exists. Further, he said symbolic form was inseparable from symbolic context. Langer (1942) developed the idea that symbolizing is the starting point for all intellectualization and expression in relation to speech. Burke (1966) theorized that the function of language is symbolic inducement. Symbolic inducement refers to symbolic functions that begin in the mind and invite us to action. Blumer (1969) said that within each of us there is a structure of symbols which consists of mutually shared meanings that result from interaction with each other and reciprocal processes or role-making and role-taking. Clark (1972) suggested leaders play an important role in creating and maintaining institutional sagas. Dill (1984) said leadership attention to social integration and symbolic events may enable leaders to sustain and strengthen the culture that already exists. Researchers (Birnbaum, 1989, Bolman & Deal, 1991; Chaffee, 1984, 1989; Fujita, 1990; Neuman, 1989; Tierney, 1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1992) all suggested symbols are strategies for understanding and acting. Tierney (1989) theorized that symbols define

leadership and the organization in which the leader resides. Tierney emphasized that in order to understand the role of symbolic context adequately we need to understand how these symbolic forms exist and function. This study by Pellegrino (2002) adds the contribution of context to a study of symbolic leadership and suggests that symbols are derived out of context and are given their power by the context in which they reside.

## 2. The Challenge to Researchers is to Examine and Interpret the Social World of the Symbolic Leader.

Learning from symbolic leadership experience entails making sense of a life experience itself. In other words, the meaning of life experience is not dependent on the experience itself, but on the process of interpretation of the symbolic experience. Possibilities abound as these lives inform the present and emerging role of symbolic leadership in educational research. Yet, we are also interested in the trajectory of a leader's life to make and find meanings in their life. The power of stories, the importance of personal narratives, the significance of whose perspective is being expressed and whose perspective is being heard embodies interpretive and naturalistic inquiry. Glesne and Pheskin (1992) said we realize how much we need to know about the life of one person in order to understand something as complex as leadership. To understand leadership is to understand the symbolic meaning leaders bring to their speech and actions. To learn from symbolic meanings is to inform our understanding of leadership. This work necessitates both knowing what values and what symbolic context surrounds leadership. Tierney (1989) said, if a central component of leadership is to manage the

symbolic aspects of the organization then necessarily it is helpful to investigate what leaders perceive leadership to be and what symbolic activities' leaders perceive they have utilized to fulfill their own perceptions of leadership. The challenge to researchers is to examine symbolism to see if it helps define leadership or authority in higher education. If so, then we must turn to examine the symbolic activities of individual leaders rather than assume that all individuals march to the same organizational beat.

### 3. The Contribution to the Advancement of Leadership Knowledge

This case study provides a report of findings on the link between symbolic context and the symbols of leadership. Tierney (1989) said, if the study of symbolic leadership was to move any further, we had to examine the symbolic forms leaders use and the symbolic context which surrounds them. Jean Byers Sampson perceived a set of value choices, not position. It was not about whom she thought she was, but what she could do to convene the community around a set of mutually shared values. Jean Byers Sampson's example of symbolic leadership supports the idea that there is a set of conceptual and ideological orientations which are present in the form of values and beliefs, carried by symbols embedded in context, which are brought forward to convene or unite a community.

Tierney (1989) said context gives symbols their power. This case study supports this idea. As this study indicates, context is culturally constructed so that, more or less, it reflects the dominant cultural values which are perpetuated within individual life

experiences. Each contextual experience provided symbolic meaning and evidence of Jean Byers Sampson's symbolic leadership. Therefore, context plays a significant role in the process of interpretation. Interacting with various layers of contextual experience functions to shape a version of the person's lived experience. It also informed this researcher of an understanding and meaning of the lived experience. Context plays a powerful role in shaping the process of symbolic meaning-making. Even though one may come from similar sociocultural backgrounds, each of us has experienced varying degrees of cultural impact on prevailing values which serve to motivate and guide leadership behavior. Therefore, symbols and symbolic context are essential elements in the definition of leadership.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This study suggests that more research is necessary. Researchers should continue to examine both the symbolic form leader's use and the symbolic context for leadership. Researchers should continue to extract patterns, orders, senses and meanings from their leader's life and experiences. For example, symbols overlap each other and could be said to influence each other. How do they influence each other? Another possible research area is to compare symbolic leadership experience with the experience of organizational participants to examine if symbols help organizational participants make sense of the organization. Still, researchers might ask themselves if one highly charged symbolic context (i.e., as in Resist or Resign) in one organization holds the same symbolic value in another institution or in the same institution at a later point. Researchers may seek an

understanding of how symbols change and evolve over time, in an organization, due to historical changes. Finally, researchers may seek to apply semiotic analysis to an analysis of leadership language.

### **Concluding Comments**

I begin my final comments by proposing a metaphor expressed by Rabbi Richard Address “When we die, life ends, but the relationship continues.” The evidence of a life lived is embodied in context. When the life is revived through research it transcends the boundaries of pure symbolic data to become a reconstructed version of a life once again which holds meaning.. What emerges from this study, is that by examining the context for symbolic leadership, one can understand how the collection of symbols Jean Byers Sampson, either inherited or invented, connected her leadership to the institutions she served which informed and brought meaning to Jane Byers Sampson’s life and the life of this researcher.

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## APPENDICES



## Appendix A: Letter of Informed Consent

TITLE OF PROJECT: A CASE STUDY EXPLORATION OF THE SYMBOLIC LEADERSHIP OF JEAN BYERS SAMPSON: CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND EDUCATOR

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Vincent M. Pellegrino  
Doctoral Student  
Department of Instructional Technology,  
Curriculum, and Evaluation  
College of Education  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

579 Shore Road  
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107

Date

Dear

Jean Byers Sampson served with distinction as the first female Chair of the University of Maine System Board of Trustees. The family of Jean Byers Sampson has given their permission to me to conduct a case study analysis of the leadership of Jean Byers Sampson. This information will be compiled into a doctoral dissertation that will aid me in fulfilling the partial requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

You are invited to voluntarily participate in this research study of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. Enclosed in an Informed Consent Form. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, please call me. The Informed Consent Form outlines the purpose, risks and benefits of this research. I hope you will agree to have a one-hour audio taped interview regarding the context of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership. You may choose not to participate in this research at this time, if so please indicate that you do not wish to participate and return the Informed Consent Form to me in the enclosed stamped envelope.

If you agree to participate, I will call you to find a date, time and place that are convenient for you to participate in the interview. Thank you for your willingness to consider your participation in this significant study of Jean Byers Sampson's leadership.

Very sincerely yours,

Vincent M. Pellegrino

## Appendix B: Informed Consent Statement

I have read the description and explanation of the study. I understand the purpose of study, the procedures to be used, and my role in the research. I specifically understand that my actual name will not be used, and I agree to participate in the study.

### Risks

The risk or harm from participation in this research is no greater, considering probability and magnitude, than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

### Benefits

There are no direct benefits for you as a result of your participation in this study.

### Confidentiality

Your identity will be kept confidential. No reference will be made to your identity in the audiotape, written transcriptions, during data analysis or in the interpretation stages of the research. Data will be securely stored in a locked file cabinet in my home.

### Contact Information

If you have questions, at any time, during this research have the right to speak to call Vincent Pellegrino at (207) 799-1394 or email him at vpelleg1@maine.rr.com or call Dr. Mary Jane Connelly at (865) 974-6147 or email her at mconnel@utk.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a voluntary participant in this research project, you may call the Compliance Section of the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee at (865) 974-3466.

### Participation

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may decline to participate without a penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before the data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

### Consent

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C: Illustration of Start List and Pattern Codes

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<b>Position 1: Data Sources</b>	<b>Code</b>
<b>Archived</b>	<b>Ar</b>
<b>Document</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>Physical Artifact</b>	<b>Pa</b>
<b>Interview</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>JBS Diary</b>	<b>JD</b>
<hr/> <b>Question 1 - Position 2: Symbols</b>	
<b>Metaphorical</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Physical</b>	<b>Ph</b>
<b>Communicative</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Structural</b>	<b>St</b>
<b>Personification</b>	<b>Pe</b>
<b>Ideational</b>	<b>I</b>
<hr/> <b>Question 2 - Position 3: Context</b>	
<b>1946-1947</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>1947-1962</b>	<b>MN</b>
<b>1962-1970</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1965-1985</b>	<b>UM</b>

**Table 1 (Continued)**

1968-1993

MC

**Question 3 - Position 4: Values**

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<b>Accountability</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Citizen-centered</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Civility</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Civil Rights</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Community Service</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Compassion</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Dignity</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Equality</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Fairness</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Freedom</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Justice</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Law</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Moral Unity</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>19</b>

**Table 1 (Continued)**

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Shared Values</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Societal Benefit</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Truth</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Trust</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Women's Aspirations</b>	<b>26</b>

**Question 4 - Position 5: Communication**

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<b>Written</b>	<b>W</b>
<b>Spoken</b>	<b>S</b>

**Pattern Codes**

---

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Th</b>
<b>Causes/Explanations</b>	<b>CE</b>
<b>Contextual Relationships</b>	<b>CR</b>
<b>Theoretical Constructs</b>	<b>ThC</b>

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## VITA

Vincent Michael Pellegrino was born in Massena, New York on June 23, 1950. He attended a private elementary school in New York and a public middle school in Florida. He graduated from Bishop Barry College Preparatory Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1968. He completed military service in 1972 and attend the University of Florida on scholarship. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Florida in 1975 with honors. He began his career as a hospital public relations director serving three years before returning to the University of Florida on scholarship for his Master's degree. He graduated with a Master of Arts Degree in Communications in 1981 with honors. He receives his Doctor of Education degree in Education Administration and Policy Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, August 2002.

He is presently the United States and European Director of the Grant Foundation for Hôpital Albert Schweitzer, Haiti. He came to this position from 10 years experience serving as a hospital administrator nationwide and abroad and 10 years service to public higher education as an administrator. Presently, his career focus is fund-raising for healthcare, education and social justice in Haiti. He volunteers time to nonprofits nationwide. He is married, has two sons and lives in Sarasota, Florida. His interests are collecting rare maps and books and learning to play blues guitar. Upon graduation he seeks to do postdoctoral work in symbolism.