Haverford Study Looks at "Hurried Child Syndrome"

Studies recently completed at Haverford College indicate that pre-schoolers whose mothers emphasized academic skills are not necessarily better prepared in grade school than children whose mothers put less emphasis on learning at an early age.

During their investigation into the effects of what has been called the "hurried child syndrome", Haverford Assistant Professor of Psychology, Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek, and Bryn Mawr student Marcia Molson ’86 also found that children of these academically-oriented mothers showed greater signs of anxiety.

"Currently there is an ongoing debate over the repercussions of stressing learning skills at very early ages," explains Molson.

"On one hand, parents are told that their children are capable of vast amounts of learning practically from birth, and that as 'good' parents they should be teaching them as much as possible, as early as possible. On the other hand, these same parents hear and read about the effects of stress on children and that they should simply let their children play and 'be children'."

Part of what prompted Hirsh-Pasek and Molson to study the "hurried child syndrome" was that little, if any, systematic research has been done in this area. "Parents are exposed to a tremendous amount of rhetoric over what is the best environment for their child's academic development," says Hirsh-Pasek. "To date, however, there has been no empirical research to test these various opinions."

Hirsh-Pasek and Molson's investigation involved 28 first graders in a private suburban school. Through a series of interviews and tests with the mothers, their children, and the teachers, they were able to measure each child's academic, social, and emotional development. Parental expectations and the child's pre-school experiences were used to distinguish each mother's academic orientation.

An unexpected trend that emerged was that children whose mothers stressed academic skills were not academically more advanced in grade school, but they did seem to be socially more developed. According to Hirsh-Pasek this particular finding brings into question a long-held view among many psychologists that if you stress a child's academic skills you will not automatically produce greater social development.

"Currently there is an ongoing debate over the repercussions of stressing learning skills at very early ages." While their data is statistically significant for the size group they studied, Hirsh-Pasek and Molson caution that a long-term study is essential. "It would be important to know if the differences we saw in these children were the beginning of even greater differences in adolescence and adulthood or if they simply leveled out over time," concludes Molson.

Hirsh-Pasek and Dr. Marion Hyson of the University of Delaware hope to explore some of these long-term effects on a broader population of subjects over the next three years.

Four Honorary Degree Recipients Speak at Commencement

Addressing the May 18 commencement audience of nearly 1,000 people were four honorary degree recipients. Each recipient spoke for approximately five minutes to 238 graduates, their parents, faculty and administrators. The recipients included Curator of the College's Quaker collection, Edwin B. Bronner, President of Macalaster College and former Haverford Provost Robert M. Gavin, Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Union Pacific Railroad Andrew L. Lewis, Jr. '53, and former Chairperson of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Eleanor Holmes Norton.

In recognition of his many years of teaching Friends' values and his long service to Quaker committees around the world, Edwin B. Bronner, who earned a Haverford Master of Arts degree in 1947, was awarded an honorary doctor of humane letters. Bronner retires this month as the College's head librarian but will remain on the faculty and continue to serve as curator of the Quaker collection.

Bronner's remarks to the class of 1986 centered on the Haverford tradition of "putting your knowledge, your humanity, your initiative and your individuality to work in the society around us." He urged the students not to rely on outside help but to choose this path for themselves.

A member of the Society of Friends, Bronner has served as chair of the International Centers Committee, the American section of the Friends Committee on Consultation, and the Friends World Committee on Consultation in London. He recently co-authored the forthcoming Volume 5, William Penn's Publications 1660-1726: An Interpretative Bibliography.

After eighteen years with the College, first as professor of chemistry, later as the director of the computer center and as the College's provost, Robert Gavin returned from Macalaster College to receive an honorary doctor of science degree.
Many Haverford graduates continue to pursue employment in the arts, the sciences, social services, business, and government, while approximately 40% of Haverford’s students seek academic graduate degrees. Some students who enroll in professional schools do so after one to five years of work experience.

According to Liz Bernard, Director of Career Development, most professional schools today, including business, law, and journalism, prefer graduates with work experience.

Gavin is the president of Macales­ter for two years and is living in St. Paul, Minn. “Just a few miles south of Lake Wobegon,” he quipped, “However, it’s great to be back in my Lake Wobegon on the Main Line.”

Gavin echoed Isaac Sharpless’ advice from 1988, calling for high intellectual standards and a commitment to one’s conscience. “Following your conscience is extremely important,” he told the graduates. “Take what you’ve learned here and go out and transform the world into that kind of place.”

A former National Science Foundation post doctoral fellow at the James Franck Institute of the University of Chicago, Gavin was a visiting professor and scientist at the University of California at Berkeley from 1978 to 1979. His research interests have included mechanisms of reactions on metal surfaces and molecular orbital theory applications to geometry.

The responsibility of the press when covering controversial stories, particularly if one or more of the involved parties, refuses to talk to the press, “The lifeblood of journalism and side with the experts,” Warsh said. He added that the subject of a talk by David Warsh, an economics writer for The Boston Globe and author of The Idea of Economic Complexity.

Gavin was the first woman to chair the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

In conclusion he said, “I do come from a Quaker background. I believe in consensus. There is no consensus on this degree, if one-third of your faculty objects. With great respect for the College, I return the degree.”

As he removed his academic hood and returned to his seat on the platform, the audience, initially surprised, stood and gave him an ovation.

Chairman and chief executive officer of Warner Amex Cable Communications, the nation’s sixth largest cable systems operator.

Lewis went on to describe the difficulty of the FTC’s negotiations and the personal sadness he felt for the families of the controllers.

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Gordon, a third-generation Haverfordian whose son, Russell, graduated in 1977, is a former manager of Haverford’s Board.

Acting President Ronald Thiemann con­cluded the morning commencement with valedictory remarks.

He reminded the class of 1986 that their Haverford education has been “an experiment in thinking,” and an opportunity to explore many perspectives on the problems of the human condition. “The array of ideas and points of view to which you have been exposed,” Thiemann added, “should have launched you on a search for truth, a search that you recognize will last a lifetime.”

This was Thiemann’s final address, end­­ing a decade of teaching in the Religion Department and of administrative service to the College.

At the end of the 1980-81 academic year, Mayor Terry Irving ’73, a producer at ABC News’ “Nightline,” discussed the public impact of television journalism and the problems of the human condition. “The array of ideas and points of view to which you have been exposed,” Thiemann added, “should have launched you on a search for truth, a search that you recognize will last a lifetime.”

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As of July 1, Thiemann became Dean of Harvard’s Divinity School and President Robert Stevens, who had been on sabbatical in Oxford, returned to the College.
Nightline's five days of live coverage from South Africa. "The images, the choice of what you're going to show can twist a story any which way," Irving explained. "Print journalists have the space to relate the whole picture. In TV journalism, you think about every word."

In order to give as accurate a picture of South Africa as possible, "Nightline" presented the black and white points of view of South Africa separately for, as Irving explained, 'Black South Africans and white South Africans don't live in the same world.' Irving acknowledged the show's impact on the public: "As Nightline's broadcast from South Africa, the situation there was not much of a story."

Silk concluded the morning's program with this advice for budding journalists: "The press tries to do two things at once: it tries to be accurate and dispassionate and because journalism deals with people, you have to be a moral person." Over lunch, students had the opportunity to talk informally with the guests.

Elisabeth Sachs '87

"The lifeblood of journalism is getting both sides of the story."

John Davidson's "Festivity," the scherzo of his 5th Symphony, was one of four compositions selected from nearly 200 scores for a rare performance by the Minnesota Orchestra on May 14. Noted for being progressive, the Minnesota Orchestra is creating a recorded library of new works so that other orchestras may consider them for performance. Davidson's composition is now part of that permanent collection.

Another Davidson work, "Sinfonia for Cimbalom and Orchestra," was performed at the Academy of Music by the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia on May 19. The cimbalom is an Eastern European folk instrument which produces a percussive sound.

Watson, NEH Grant Recipients

Through prestigious research grants, three Haverford College students are exploring a variety of lifestyles this summer. The topics range from British expatriates who stayed in India after independence, to 19th century women in Moretown, Vermont, to the workers of the international steel industry.

Colin Aldrin-Fieman '86 is traveling to India and interviewing British expatriates who chose to remain in India after that nation's independence in 1947. Deborah Abbott '87 is spending this summer the Americas state archives, community records, and personal diaries in order to recreate Moretown, Vermont from 1870-1900. Theodore Rybeck '86 is traveling throughout Europe, Mexico, and Japan interviewing workers, union leaders, company officials and government representatives who have been touched by the volatile international steel industry.

Aldrin-Fieman and Rybeck's projects are each supported by a $10,000 Watson fellowship. Presented annually to only 70 college students nationwide, the Watson gives recipients the chance to focus on a topic of international concern and to develop a broader understanding of American culture. Since 1973, twenty-four students from Haverford have been Watson Fellows.

Abbott's research is being funded by a $2,200 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant is part of the NEH Younger Scholars Program which helps high school and college students pursue independent research and writing projects during the summer months.

Personal experience led both Watson winners to choose their areas of research. From the age of nine, Aldrin-Fieman has spent various lengths of time in India cultivating friendships with both the British and native Indians. He is moved by the question, 'How have the expatriates created a community which is not one of complete isolation, but one of adaptation to the modernization of India?' Rybeck grew up in the Ohio Valley (Wheeling, W. Va.) where ten years of plant closings have affected the lives of family members. This experience has led him to probe how other communities have handled similar shifts in their regional economies.

"This is a chance," Rybeck says, "to learn what's going on in the world and to apply it back to Wheeling."

Elisabeth Sachs '87

Watson, NEH Grant Recipients

Central to Abbott's research has been the diary of Clara Howes, Abbott's great great paternal grandmother. By using other diaries, newspapers, town, state and church records, Abbott is developing the theme of change and continuity in a small rural town. Specifically, she is exploring Moretown, Vt. and examining how the elderly and the sick were cared for; the types of activities available to women outside of the home and family; and whether Moretown experienced unique patterns of change because of Irish immigration.

Elisabeth Sachs '87

The classes of 1970 through 1984 more than matched Haverford's "first-ever" Young Alumni Challenge by contributing over $33,000 in new gifts to the College. More important than the actual dollars raised were the numbers of new donors contributing to the fund (594, as of June 24). As a result of their support it is expected that overall alumni participation in Annual Giving will increase to 50% by the close of this year's campaign.
Women's Lacrosse Earns NCAA Bid

Haverford sports fans received a rare treat this spring: the first Haverford team to compete a regular season undefeated since World War II.

Returning from an 8-3 season in 1985, the women's lacrosse team had high expectations as it entered its first season of play in the Middle Atlantic Conference (MAC). The enthusiasm of first-year coach Deborah Gallagher combined with the talent and hustle of captains Lydia Martin '86, Rachel Wilbur '86 and the rest of the squad proved to be an unbeatable mix.

The team swept to three quick wins, including a 7-5 victory over Division I Hofstra University, before traveling to Madison, N.J., to face two-time MAC champ Drew University. The Fords jumped out to an 8-1 lead before the over-confident Rangers got their offense on track. Junior Stephanie James' four goals and sophomore Laura Kallin's goal-tending led the Fords to a 9-7 win.

The victory catapulted Haverford to a number four ranking in the Brine Women's National Collegiate Lacrosse Poll. Meanwhile, the Fords rolled on to five more wins, scoring 83 goals and allowing only 29. Only Franklin and Marshall College, another former MAC champion, stood in the way of the MAC East Division title. Playing in an April snowstorm, the score see-sawed constantly. Goals by James, Debbie Anderson '88 and Ruth Sorrells '87 powered Haverford to a 6-5 halftime lead.

With only four minutes left in the game, the score was tied at 12. Suddenly, James penetrated the Diplomat defense. Her unassisted goal locked up the MAC East title for Haverford.

A 17-4 win over Washington College closed out the Fords' regular season at 13-0. The 1984 football squad, which finished 7-0,