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Historical Portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs: Founder of the National Association for Gifted Children

Abstract

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs examines the life of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the Editor of the Gifted Child Quarterly from 1954-1974. Considering Isaacs' personal and public work frames the founding of the NAGC, development of its mission, published essays, and advocacy work. Once the historical perspective has been considered, Isaacs' work will be considered alongside the contemporary NAGC, its advocacy work, and its published writing. This portrait provides historical context for the founding of the NAGC and examines the influence of the founder on the contemporary organization.

Implications of the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs are provided for researchers and practitioners including the role of history in the field of gifted education, effective principles of advocacy for gifted children, and contemporary directions for the field. This portrait honors Isaacs and returns her to pride of place in the history of the field of gifted education. Examining Isaacs' unique experiences of identity and her historical context sheds light on a critical era in gifted education—the 1950s-1970s.

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Historical Portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs: Founder of the National Association for Gifted
Children

A Dissertation in Practice

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Anna Armitage

June 2022

Dr. Norma Hafenstein

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Abstract

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs examines the life of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the Editor of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* from 1954-1974. Considering Isaacs' personal and public work frames the founding of the NAGC, development of its mission, published essays, and advocacy work. Once the historical perspective has been considered, Isaacs' work will be considered alongside the contemporary NAGC, its advocacy work, and its published writing. This portrait provides historical context for the founding of the NAGC and examines the influence of the founder on the contemporary organization.

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Chapter One: Introduction

“The history we study offers us models for the kind of people we are trying to become and so some of the deep splits in personhood, from which so many of us have suffered, are healing.” (Lerner, 1979, p. xv)

Ann Fabe Isaacs founded the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). She was an eminent, public figure of her time. In addition to founding NAGC, Isaacs began the first research journal for gifted education, the *Gifted Child Quarterly (GCQ)*, and was a leader in gifted advocacy. Despite these public and significant contributions to the field of gifted education, Isaacs has largely been forgotten. The purpose of this study is to examine the life of the founder of the NAGC. This study returns Isaacs to her pride of place. It also increases knowledge on the history of the field of gifted education in the United States using a qualitative contextualized portrait of her life and resulting influence over the field of gifted education. The additional knowledge that this study provides to the history of gifted education—particularly in the contentious period of the 1950’s—can support contemporary gifted advocacy efforts.

Background of the Problem

The history of gifted education in the United States has been and continues to be neglected by members of the field of gifted education as well as historians of education. This neglect has led to prolonged silences about the lived experiences of researchers,

teachers, and advocates of the gifted. The two monographs that have been written on the history of gifted education in the past two decades (Jolly, 2018; Robinson & Jolly, 2014)

are not sufficient to tell the extensive stories of the individuals and events that have made gifted education what it is today. Two monographs could never truly cover the history of an entire field. Two monographs from a singular researcher are not representative of the diverse field of gifted education research and advocates.

Less recent research—prior to the past two decades—has also been scant in the history of gifted education. Prior to Jolly taking on the role of the historian of gifted education, Gallagher did this work (Gallagher, 1994; Gallagher & Weis, 1979). However, Gallagher’s work focused less on the pivotal moment of the mid-20th century (Robins, 2010) when Isaacs was founding and working with the NAGC. Further, a lack of emphasis on the history of gifted education following the work of Gallagher in 1994 leaves only the voice of Jolly to fill the void. Thus, the historical record of gifted education is missing both stories and the voices of diverse researchers.

The single educational history journal in the United States, the *American Educational History Journal* is published annually as a book. Since 2007, there has only been a single article on the history of gifted education (Jolly, 2009a). Further, its author is one of the only scholars within the field of gifted education that is frequently considering the history of the gifted education. Jolly authored and co-authored the only two monographs on gifted educational history in the last two decades (Jolly, 2018; Robinson & Jolly, 2014). A single researcher is incapable of finding and telling every story within a field that has been active for over a century in the U.S. In the introduction of *A History of American Gifted Education*, Jolly (2018) identifies the challenge of finding a written history of gifted education:

Scholars in the field of gifted education have recorded brief histories (Robinson & Jolly, 2014; Tannenbaum, 1983) to provide perspective, and these have typically appeared in chapter or article form, leaving the reader with an introduction to the historical past. The significance of the history presented in this text is understood through the lens in which we live today, and no way is it a definitive account, as there are always individuals, places, ideas, and events that will be missed, remain unknown, or are yet to be discovered. (Jolly, p. 1)

The recognition that “there are always individuals, places, ideas, and events that will be missed, remain unknown, or are yet to be discovered” (Jolly, 2018, p. 1) grounds this study. For the case of Ann Fabe Isaacs, much of her story remains unknown although her influence in the field is still felt today through her organization and journal, the NAGC and the *GCQ*.

Ann Fabe Isaacs

Ann Fabe Isaacs was born in 1920 in Cincinnati to low-income Jewish parents. She would spend her entire life in Cincinnati and even use her home address as the mailing address of the NAGC and the *GCQ*. After receiving her B.A. from the University of Cincinnati in early childhood education, Isaacs worked as a psychologist while earning a graduate degree at Xavier University in counseling. After completing this second degree, Isaacs founded her own preschool. This is where Isaacs’ interest in gifted children would develop.

Isaacs completed IQ assessments on her preschool students and then informally studied those with high IQ scores as they went on to K-12 education. She wondered why some gifted children—those with high IQ scores—struggled to succeed in the traditional school setting. Determined to support these struggling children, Isaacs founded the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952 and the National

Association for Gifted Children in 1954. In 1957, Articles of Incorporation were signed, an agenda was set, and the *Gifted Child Newsletter*—the predecessor to the *Gifted Child Quarterly* was established. The following five principles guided the NAGC:

1. Stimulation of interest and research in gifted education including guidance, developmental, remedial, and preventative instruction related to education and training (Isaacs, 1957)
2. Dissemination of scientific information regarding the gifted (Isaacs, 1957)
3. Analysis of the problems of the gifted and dissemination of information about good practices in all phases of working with them (Isaacs, 1957)
4. Provision of opportunities for classroom teachers to study about and improve methods of working with gifted learners (Isaacs, 1957)
5. Publish and report scientific and experimental investigations as well as practices that result in improved methods for working with the gifted (Isaacs, 1957)

These goals would keep Isaacs' busy with the organization until she was removed in 1974. In addition, these lofty goals continue to keep the field of gifted education busy in 2022.

The initial goals of the NAGC demonstrate the impetus for sharing knowledge with others—which was formalized in 1957 with the first issues of the *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *GCQ*, initially titled the *Gifted Child Newsletter*. Sharing knowledge continues to be a foundation of the NAGC in the 21st century—visible through their free online and print resources. The contemporary NAGC also works to share accurate,

research-based knowledge to support effective advocacy (Roberts, 2014). The influence of Isaacs' original goals for her organization and the role of the journal remains today. Prior to the publication of the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, and the March 30, 2022, piece by Robinson about Isaacs, all that was known about Isaacs came from Rogers' 2013 chapter, *She Made Our Garden Grow* in *Illuminating lives* (Robinson & Jolly, 2014).

While this chapter is incredibly useful, it is too brief to provide a rich examination of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs builds upon Rogers' chapter and expands the historical record of Isaacs' life. This study examines how Isaacs' life and identity shaped her founding and running of the NAGC and the *GCQ*. Consideration of the historical perspective is then used to contextualize the contemporary field of gifted education and ongoing work of the NAGC.

National Association for Gifted Children

The NAGC is the preeminent gifted advocacy and research organization in the United States. Annually thousands of individuals utilize NAGC resources through their website, and in their published books, read the *GCQ*, and the NAGC's two additional journals—*Teaching for High Potential* (NAGC, 2022b) and *Parenting for High Potential* (NAGC, 2022a). Thousands also attend and dozens present at the annual convention, state-level affiliate conferences of the NAGC, and the NAGC annual legislative advocacy conference (NAGC, 2021e). The contemporary goals of the NAGC (2021c) have not shifted significantly from the goals stated in Ann Fabe Isaacs' initial articles of incorporation:

NAGC's mission is to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children through education, advocacy, community building, and research. We aim to support parents and families; K-12 education professionals, including support and service personnel; and members of the research and higher education community. (NAGC, 2021c, para. 1)

The reach of the NAGC is extensive. Their work and guidance, through conferences and publications, continues to propel forward the work of teachers, parents, advocates, and researchers who are united in their support for gifted education.

Gifted Child Quarterly

Advocacy and research, as well as parent and teacher support efforts of NAGC have been expanded in recent decades through the *GCQ* and the quarterly magazines, *Parenting for High Potential* and *Teaching for High Potential*. The *GCQ* is the most widely read research journal in the field of gifted education. Readership of the *GCQ* is 154,956 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020a). Readership of comparative journals include the *Journal for the Education of the Gifted* with 56,642 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020e), *Roeper Review* with 67,000 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020f), *Gifted Child Today* with 65,521 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020b), *Journal of Advanced Academics* with 45,078 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020c), and the journal of *High Ability Studies* with a readership of 41,000 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020d) respectively. The contemporary *Gifted Child Quarterly's* impact factor of 3.564 demonstrates the incredible reach of this forum for research and advocacy.

Problem of Practice

Ann Fabe Isaacs' influence on the field of gifted education can be realized in the role of the NAGC in the 21st century. NAGC's impact is substantial. Failing to recognize

Isaacs' contributions through a close examination of her life leaves too much up to the imagination of contemporary researchers and advocates. Ultimately, this creates a problem of practice for the field of gifted education. According to the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, a “problem of practice is a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experiences, and outcomes” (CPED, 2021, para. 12). Failure to recognize the role that Ann Fabe Isaacs played in the field of gifted education, through her establishment of the NAGC and the *GCQ* leaves gaps in understanding the contemporary field itself.

The limited published information on the history of gifted education is persistent and only one researcher has devoted significant new information to this sub-field—Jolly. A deep and complex examination of one's own history is essential for moving forward with advocacy and authentic change. American author and civil rights activist James Baldwin argued:

For history, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are consciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It could scarcely be otherwise, since it is to history that we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations. (Baldwin, 1996, para. 5)

Examining the life of Ann Fabe Isaacs has multiple consequences for the field of gifted education. Integrating Isaacs to the historical record rights a wrong—the missingness of Isaacs as a leader in gifted education. In addition, an examination of the history of the NAGC and Isaacs' influence provides greater knowledge for researchers, teachers, and advocates serving gifted children in the present moment.

Thus, the portrait of Isaacs “has the potential to result in improved understanding, experiences, and outcomes” (CPED, 2021, para. 12) at a time when education for gifted and talented students is under attack in the United States. While the examination of Isaacs may seem purely academic, it has consequences for the lived experiences of gifted advocates—and subsequently gifted children in the U.S. today.

The attack on gifted education comes from outside the field and within. In 2019, a New York City Public Schools Task Force appointed by Mayor de Blasio recommended that gifted and talented students no longer be educated separately from their same age peers—a recommendation which has begun to take effect (Jorgensen, 2021). This attack on gifted education in New York City revolves around the inequity of the programs—not their effectiveness. Gifted and talented programs in New York City, and the rest of the nation, are disproportionately White, Asian, and middle to upper class (Gentry, et al., 2019).

These inequities are not unknown to the field of gifted education. Creating more equitable gifted programs is a topic of key interest for researchers, teachers, and advocates in gifted education (Belleza, 2012; Borland, 2018; Brown et al., 2005; Ford, 2002; Ford, 2013; Ford & King, 2014; Ford & Whiting, 2008; Ford et al., 2011; Friedman, 2010; Gentry et al., 2019; Goings & Ford, 2018; Grissom et al., 2019; Hafenstein, 2020; Kaufman, 2018; Lee & Green, 2020; Lee & Ritchotte, 2017; Mayes et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2005; NAGC, 2021d; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; Pfeiffer, 2012; Plucker, 2012; Plucker & Callahan, 2014; Ritchotte, et al., 2020). The April 2022 issue of the *GCQ* was a special issue devoted specifically to equity. However,

the issue of equity in gifted programs will not be solved through their dismantling (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2003). Rather, gifted programs will only become equitable when resources and attention are turned to the identification and retention of underrepresented groups (Ford, 2013; Olszewski-Kubilius, 2003).

Within the field of gifted education, researchers of equity are typically the most vocal supporters of maintaining gifted education programs (Ford, 2013; Ford & King, 2014; Olszewski-Kubilius, 2003). In contrast, a professor of gifted education at Columbia University espouses removing the “gifted” label and has harshly critiqued New York City’s gifted and talented programs (Borland, 2018). Gifted programming advocates and researchers do not deny the challenges of creating equitable gifted programs, but they do not see a solution to inequity in the disintegration of gifted programming (Ford & King, 2014). Activists and advocates outside of the field of gifted education however, often weaponize the history of gifted education in the U.S. This is possible because of the dearth of research on the history of gifted education in the U.S.—particularly in the contentious period of the 1950s (Robins, 2010).

When discussing the root of inequities in gifted education, the role of history is often named by scholars in the field (Dickson, 2021; Whiting, 2021). Unfortunately, the lack of publications and research on the history of gifted education in the U.S., makes it difficult to challenge historical claims of inequity with anything other than speculation. References to historical gifted education frequently imply historical causality when only correlation has been proven. A Vanderbilt researcher and professor of African American and Diaspora studies, whose interests include the underrepresentation of gifted children

of color, emphasized the landmark Supreme Court school desegregation case *Brown v. Board of Education* and the founding of NAGC both in 1954 as no mere coincidence (Whiting, 2021). A 2017 winner of the NAGC President’s Award and practitioner/advocate for gifted children identified the role of the events of 1954 in spurring the establishment of gifted programs (Dickson, 2021). These brief references and comments, without further explanation, elaboration, or citation harm the field of gifted education and the work of contemporary advocates by allowing assumptions to be told as truths.

Claims that gifted education is an outgrowth of segregation and a tool to keep it in place are weaponized against advocates for gifted programming (Blustain, 2020; Dreilinger, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Pirtle, 2019; Reindl, 2020). One such argument made before the New York State Assembly on May 10, 2019, claimed that “historically, G&T programs and other ‘advanced’ curricular offerings grew during the desegregation era as a way for more affluent White families to secure additional resources and maintain segregation” (Roda & Kafka, 2019). This comment refers to the contentious 1950s where desegregation plans were forcibly implemented because of the supreme court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In few other places is misunderstood or unknown history having a greater impact on the lived experiences of individuals today. It is in the debates over gifted education programs in the U.S. that Baldwin’s argument, “the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us” (1966) comes to fruition. The realities of weaponizing history in the current moment make it paramount that the history of gifted education is

better understood—particularly in the case of Ann Fabe Isaacs who founded the NAGC in 1954, the same year as the *Brown* decision. Without a complex examination of Isaacs and the early years of the NAGC, the coterminous events of 1954—founding of the NAGC and the *Brown* decision—can continue to be weaponized against gifted education advocates.

While the question of the coterminous founding of the NAGC provided an initial impetus for this study, archival research has found the relationship between the *Brown* decision and the founding of NAGC to be even more limited than previously assumed. Archival research revealed Isaacs' initial founding of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952. There is a picture of this document included in chapter four (Figure 16). This makes the argument that gifted programming—and by extension the NAGC—was established in the U.S. to stem White flight and curb integration even more preposterous than previously presumed. While the work of Terman (1925), makes clear that gifted education and gifted children existed in the minds of researchers and teachers before 1954, the widespread establishment of gifted programming beginning in the 1950s could before having been casually linked to *Brown v. Board*. However, that casual linkage has become even further from accurate to the details of history through the examination of archival materials for this study.

Purpose of the Study

Arising from the problem of practice—a lack of information on the life and influence of Ann Fabe Isaacs—the goal of this study is simple: The purpose of this study is to examine the life of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children, Ann Fabe

Isaacs during the formation and her tenure at the NAGC, 1950-1975. These years were chosen because of the neglect of gifted education history during this period (Robins, 2010), as well as the importance of the NAGC historically and in the contemporary moment. Creation of a qualitative portrait emphasizing the contours of Isaacs' intersectionality and identities informs the examination Isaacs' life and influence. Portraiture's emphasis on context requires additional information for the broader picture of gifted education during the mid-20th century and the history of gifted education in the U.S. overall.

The nature of portraiture allows readers to draw their own conclusions of Ann Fabe Isaacs as well as the coterminous development of the NAGC and the *Brown* decision. This expands the historical record of gifted leaders and advocates. Isaacs' portrait contributes to this gap in knowledge and ultimately allow for a more accurate view of the history of gifted programming. This portrait based on historical artifacts and oral history interviews provides current gifted advocates with a clearer view of the history of gifted education in the U.S.

Research Questions

To examine the life and influence of Ann Fabe Isaacs and construct a more inclusive history of gifted education in the U.S., the following research questions ground this study. Qualitative research questions reflect the interpretive nature of the study and utilize both theoretical and conceptual frameworks to ground data collection and interpretation (Billups, 2019). The study's purpose, to examine Ann Fabe Isaacs as the founder of the NAGC, was explored through the following research questions:

- What are the intersections of Ann Fabe Isaacs' identity and experiences that have shaped the National Association for Gifted Children?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs negotiate multiple identities as an advocate for gifted education?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' intersectionality influence her work as founder and president of NAGC?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education?

The first question seeks to specifically examine Ann Fabe Isaacs and how her life—identity and experiences—contributed to her founding of the NAGC. The second question addresses Isaacs' multiple roles—a key component of feminist/women's history, which is explored in more depth in chapter two—and how these roles influenced her work as an advocate. The third question looks at the roles ascribed to Isaacs with titles such as president, founder, mother, editor, and wife in concert with her identity—middle class, Jewish, White, woman, gifted—to examine her choices. The fourth and final question looks to the actions of Isaacs that would be considered most critical for contemporary gifted researchers—her advocacy for gifted children.

Using history to look to the future is a key feature of the history of gifted education—something that is also be considered in more depth in chapter two. The findings of this study support contemporary participants in the field of gifted education in both academic and practical pursuits. Examining the life of Isaacs' sheds light on the relationship between the founding of the NAGC and school desegregation efforts. Gathering data on

this question particularly supports advocates fighting to maintain gifted programming despite equity challenges.

Significance of the Study

An increase in research on the history of gifted education can fill gaps in the field and continue to ground the ongoing work of advocates for gifted education. Advocates and researchers can use history to inform the challenges facing gifted educators, children, and advocates today—rather than work from a position of an assumed past. “Our view of history shapes the way we view the present, and therefore it dictates what answers we offer for existing problems” (Crabtree, 2001, para. 2). Only by examining where the field of gifted education has come from, can it successfully move forward.

Considering the post-*Brown* era and the momentous changes in education during the period of this study enriches the understanding of the history of education broadly, as well as gifted education more specifically. The unfounded critiques (Dickson, 2021; Roda & Kafka, 2019; Whiting, 2021) of gifted education as an outgrowth of segregation are harmful to the future of gifted programming across the U.S. The information this study uncovers about Isaacs’ life is useful to researchers, practitioners, and advocates—and those who occupy all three of these spaces—who need authentic historical grounding for their work.

Community Partner

The primary purpose of the community partner relationship in the Doctor of Education degree is to ensure collaboration and community involvement while exploring the problem of practice. This purpose is fulfilled through the Jacob Rader Marcus Center

of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) in Cincinnati, Ohio. At the end of Ann Fabe Isaacs' life, her family donated some of her papers to this site as well as to the Special Collections at the University of Cincinnati Archives and Rare Books Library. The AJA identified participant contact information for oral history interviews and provided archival resources for this study. The AJA also provided local resources to enrich the nature of this portrait.

Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

Theoretical and conceptual frameworks ground qualitative studies based on the researcher's worldview and corresponding indication of how to best frame the topic or problem. According to Creswell and Poth (2016):

These interpretive stances shape the individuals studied; the types of questions and problems examined; the approaches to data collection, data analysis, writing, and evaluation; and the use of the information to change society or add to social justice. (p. 30)

Studying the life of Ann Fabe Isaacs—a middle class (later in life), gifted, Jewish, White, woman, mother, educator, leader, and advocate—reflects the theoretical framework of feminist history. Within the frame of feminist history, feminist biography also enriches this study. Examining Isaacs beyond her public role with NAGC and the intersection of her identity is an essential component of the of feminist biography and critical to an authentic examination of her life and influence. The conceptual and theoretical frames were selected for their appropriateness based on the topic of study as well as the method. Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture methodology is aligned with these qualitative frameworks that require description, analysis, and a search for resonance (1997). The

alignment between feminist history, feminist biography, and portraiture is an essential component of the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Theoretical Framework

In the case of Ann Fabe Isaacs, her invisibility is reinforced through lack of serious attention to her life and legacy. Despite founding the leading contemporary American organization for gifted advocacy and research, Isaacs' life has been relegated to a single chapter within a monograph (Rogers, 2013), one article in a peer-reviewed journal (Robins & Jolly, 2013), a page on a website that is largely based on Rogers' findings (Robinson, 2022) and an annual Founder's Memorial Award given at the annual NAGC conference. One is left to wonder why Isaacs' life has been left unexplored when historical inquiry is highly accessible. Isaacs' papers are publicly available and accessible at two university archives in Cincinnati, Ohio. Very often, historical actors from marginalized groups—women in particular—are left out of the story because of a lack of artifacts for historians to access (Moore et al., 2016). This is not the case with Ann Fabe Isaacs. The extensive holdings of the two Cincinnati archives enabled a rich examination and portrait of her life and influence.

Considering Isaacs' neglect by gifted researchers and historians, this study considers the limited lens of history—so often trained on men—as a central reason her story has gone untold. "...traditional history has been written and interpreted by men in an androcentric frame of reference; it might quite properly be described as the history of men" (Lerner, 1979, p. xvi). Thus, this study seeks to make Isaacs' life and contributions visible as she is part of a long tradition of forgotten outstanding women. And while

gender is a critical category of analysis (Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 1979; Morgan, 2006; Pederson, 2000; Scott, 1986; Zinsler, 2012), women are so much more than their gender, and often the category of women may only share the identity of woman in common (Lerner, 1979). Isaacs' life as a woman cannot be separated from the rest of her identity: middle class, gifted, White, Jewish, wife, mother, educator, researcher, and leader. The influence of multiple identities on Isaacs' lived experiences informs the use of feminist biography and one of the major themes of feminist research—intersectionality. The complexity of Isaacs' examined life is supported using feminist biographical frameworks and tools.

Conceptual Framework

Feminist biography goes beyond the women's history philosophy of “add women and stir” (Pearce, 2014) to critically examine gender and even the category woman itself (Scott, 1986). While resurrecting Ann Fabe Isaacs' story certainly follows the belief in the value of adding women's stories to the historical record, this study goes beyond simply recognizing her contributions. To examine the life of Isaacs' and what propelled her work in the field of gifted education, her full identity must be considered. Feminist perspectives on intersectionality and the development of a portrait (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) allow for a richly descriptive rendering of her life.

Isaacs lived her entire life in Cincinnati, Ohio as a middle-class Jewish mother, wife, educator, leader, counselor, and advocate. These intersections of identity (Crenshaw, 1991), along with the unique historical period in which she lived led to a remarkable public life. Using the conceptual frame of feminist biography, this study examines how

Isaacs transcended limitations based on her lived experiences but was also bound by them. Exploration of the private and public or personal and political contestations in the lives of women has long been critical to examining the lives of publicly remarkable women (Alpern, et al., 1992). The portrait of Isaacs is a starting point for increasing knowledge of the history of gifted education in the U.S. and this notable person and organization. The portrait of Isaacs' life identifies both universal and unique experiences of Isaacs and how that shaped the NAGC.

Assumptions & Limitations of Portraiture Research

The portrait created by this study has limitations inherent to qualitative research, particularly that qualitative research is subjective as it uncovers the meanings that individuals ascribe to their personal experiences (Billups, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2016). The subjectivity of qualitative research is considered both a limitation and a strength. Portraiture relies on expert connoisseurship and criticism as only an invested and knowledgeable researcher can provide (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The role of the enlightened eye, as described and practiced by Eisner (2017) is critical to the creation of a portrait with dissonance and resonance that provides an aesthetic whole from which the reader can draw their own conclusions (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). An authentic portrait is constructed through a situated stance and relationship between the portraitist and subject (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This relationship enables a rich description of the context that results in identification of emergent themes, resonance, and dissonance (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

While portraiture is noted for its focus on describing an authentic universal through the very specific process of creating a portrait (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), the portrait cannot be said to be generalizable in the ways that a quantitative study typically can. Portraiture resists generalization through deep contextual analysis of the specific (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In addition, the study's focus on a single individual makes it even less generalizable. Despite the inability to generalize this study, the contextual emergent themes in portraiture create authentic and resonant renderings of lived experiences (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Resonance may be felt by those that share identities with Isaacs—teachers, advocates, wives, mothers, Jews, members of the middle class, and women. Thus, although this study cannot be broadly generalized, it may have resonance for many readers in one way or another.

Personal Interest as the Researcher

Qualitative research relies on the researcher as instrument (Billups, 2019). Portraiture is a richly descriptive qualitative method that necessitates a bracketing of the researcher's perspective with an awareness of their own subjectivity that is brought to the study (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). My own perspective has shaped the selection of theoretical and conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and topic for this study. I have always been a voracious student of history. However, I never saw myself in history. Coming from a single parent, low-income household in rural Florida, a mirror (Style, 1988) of my life was never held up in history classes—only a window (Style, 1988) into the lives of great White men. Fascinated by story-telling—the primary pedagogy of history teachers in the public schools I attended—it was not until my

undergraduate education that I experienced the power of seeing oneself in history. Thankfully for a Women's and Gender Studies course on women's history at the University of South Florida, I was exposed to women's stories and experiences through history. From that moment forward, I was hooked. Social and cultural histories that privileged the voices of the silenced and oppressed were my gospel and I was compelled to share the good word.

When I pursued my Master of Arts degree, I became a teaching assistant and fell in love with seeing students grow. A career as a secondary social studies teacher promised a life of telling stories that would provide students with windows and mirrors into the past that would reflect their own experiences (Style, 1988). Teaching eighth grade U.S. History was an ideal profession for me until I was handed an additional responsibility—gifted case worker for the 50 identified eighth grade students. I had been a gifted student myself in school but had no idea what that meant about me or what special services I received because of my identification. Recognition of my own past as a gifted student is a challenge. The only experiences I had with the gifted label were negative and shrouded in secrecy. This did not create excitement for my role as the eighth-grade gifted case manager.

While I tried to ignore the gifted responsibilities and focus solely on the social studies work, I worked toward my gifted endorsement. My endorsement courses were the first time I learned what it meant to be gifted. The experience of these courses was paralleled only by my first women's history course. I finally understood parts of myself that were hidden. In my early 20's, I finally learned that being social justice oriented beyond all my

peers was only unusual when I was not in a group of gifted individuals. I realized that my constant hunger for knowledge and development of new hobbies and interests throughout my life was not weird—it was part and parcel of my life as a gifted person. This changed me. While my love for history had not dwindled, my passion for gifted students' self-discovery increased.

As a full time, middle school teacher of gifted children, I use my work to advocate for the needs of gifted children and provide them with beautiful moments of self-understanding. This is possible through affective programming designed for gifted students' unique needs. My needs as a gifted student were largely ignored and misunderstood—something I seek to prevent for all my gifted students. Further, I use bibliotherapy and studies of eminent individuals to give my gifted students windows and mirrors into their own past, present, and future. My women's studies background and own gifted overexcitabilities keeps me energized to do the difficult work of gifted advocacy. Since finding my voice in my undergraduate women's history class, I have not ceased advocating for the underserved. A natural extension of this work is grounded in advocating for gifted students today who continue to be chronically underserved (Gentry et al., 2019).

These rich experiences brought me to a Doctor of Education degree with an emphasis in gifted education. And my deep belief in the key role that history plays in creating our present and reinforcing systems of oppression brought me to this research topic, framework, and method. Portraiture allows for a holistic, humanizing view of individual lived experiences. Feminist history and biography allows for new windows and mirrors to

be established for individuals who have never seen themselves in history. Telling Ann Fabe Isaacs' story enables advocates for gifted education, such as myself, to continue to do our critical work by telling the stories of the gifted advocates of the past. My contemporary educational and advocacy work is only possible because of the advocacy efforts of one of gifted education's contemporary foremothers—Ann Fabe Isaacs. This historical portrait seeks to honor the work of this outstanding individual.

Chapter Summary

The introduction to this study provides the grounding for this research. The second chapter discusses relevant theory and literature for framing the study and interpreting themes from the findings. Chapter three describes the practice, limitations, and method of Lawrence-Lightfoot's qualitative portraiture method, as well as similar studies using portraiture. The portrait is crafted through examination of historical archival artifacts as well as oral history interviews. The fourth chapter is the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The portrait includes a unifying thread, rich description, and perspective of the portraitist. The fifth and final chapter draws conclusions based on the findings and provides lessons learned from the past while also identifying key areas of future research.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs reveals the unique context of her life that made her a leader in advocacy for gifted education. This historical portrait fills gaps in the literature on the history of gifted education and provides a thorough examination of a critical participant in the field. To craft the aesthetic whole, multiple frameworks set the scene during data collection and analysis. Feminist history provides theoretical grounding and feminist biography provides a conceptual frame through which to situate the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs. Themes of intersectionality, a futurist perspective from historical research on gifted education, as well as advocacy strategies guide the research questions for this study.

Definition of Terms

Multiple terms in the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs begin with the words “socially and historically constructed category of identity.” Although categories of identity are primarily created socially and contextually, they still have very real outcomes for individuals living with those identities (Spencer, 2014). Ultimately, the reference to the social construction is not mean to imply a lack of authentic and lived consequences for these identities.

- Advocacy—Action arguing in favor of an idea, cause, policy (Roberts, 2014)

- Ethnicity—Socially and historically constructed category of identity referring to nation or culture of origin; This is often accompanied by expectations of race, religion, and cultural habits (Spencer, 2014); Jewishness is often constructed as both an ethnicity and religion (Levine-Rasky, 2008; Levine-Rasky, 2011)
- Exceptional Education—Term used to refer to special education, or the provision of educational services for children identified with disabilities—historically referred to as students who are “handicapped” (Baynton, 1998) or “defective” (Disability History Museum, 2021)
- Gender—Socially and historically constructed categories based on presumed biological sex; Gender is accompanied by behavioral expectations regarding sexuality, personality, interest, and abilities (Ellemers, 2018)
- Gifted and Talented—Definitions vary by state and by researcher; Defined here using the federal Title IX definition of gifted and talented students from the United States Department of Education (2004):
 - Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school to fully develop these capabilities. (para. 22)
- Intersectionality—Theory of power relations that situates the intersection of multiple identities as spaces of privilege and oppression (Crenshaw, 1991)

- Jewish—Ethnicity and/or religion that identifies with Hebrew ancestry and/or the followings of the religion of Judaism (Ross & Blane, 2012)
- Middle Class—Socially and historically constructed category that is not bound by an income level, although it is presumed to be in the U.S. middle class is considered subjective and individuals making typically between \$40,000 and \$100,000 annually consider themselves middle class (Cashell, 2008; Wright, 1997)
- Low Income—Class construct defined by the U.S. federal government regarding family size and income level which in 2022 included families with a taxable income below 150 percent of the federally defined poverty level (United States Department of Education, 2022)
- Race—Socially and historically constructed category of identity referring to skin color; In some cases, race connotes physical, phenotypical differences, though not always; despite its social construction, a person’s perceived and practiced race have very real consequences within their lives (Spencer, 2014)
- Twice-Exceptional—A person that meets state criteria for a gifted identification and has a documented disability; These individuals experience giftedness in a way that is unique to their twice-exceptional status (Reis et al., 2014)
- Child with a Disability—The appropriate contemporary term for a child who has a disability that utilizes the proper “person first language” (Office of Disability Rights, 2006) in contrast to historical terms that were used to describe individuals with disabilities such as “defective,” which was popular from 1870 to 1930

(Disability Rights Museum, 2021) and “handicapped” which has only fallen out of favored use in the past decade (Baynton, 1998)--both of which are now considered offensive (Baynton, 1998; Disability History Museum, 2021)

- Underrepresented and Special Populations of Gifted Children—Gifted children are under identified and underserved in the following populations: English Language Learning (ELL), twice-exceptional, students who are Black, Mixed Race, and/or Latino(a), and/or low-income; Students may inhabit multiple identities of underrepresentation in gifted education such as Mixed Race and low-income or Black and ELL which can create further marginalization and underservicing as well as challenges to identification (NAGC, 2021d)

Theoretical Framework & Conceptual Framework

Theoretical frameworks are critical for understanding the perspective of qualitative research and the epistemological paradigm in which the research is situated (Imenda, 2014). Both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks provide detail as to how the research topic is viewed in the study and what kinds of questions will be asked and answered (Billups, 2019). Conceptual frameworks are particularly critical for targeting broad theories. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs is grounded in feminist history with an emphasis on feminist biography conceptually to narrow the wide lens of feminist history.

Feminist History

The discussion of defining and firmly framing feminist history has been ongoing and a continued presence in the field of history, particularly as feminist and women’s history

are united or separated across the field (Morgan, 2006). Despite a range of definitions, tensions, and similarities between women's and feminist history, feminist history grounds this study. A panel presentation to the Committee of Women Historians at the 2000 American Historical Association by Pederson defines feminist history as:

Having always had a dual mission—on the one hand to recover the lives, experiences, and mentalities of women from the condescension and obscurity in which they have been so unnaturally placed, and on the other to reexamine and rewrite the entire historical narrative to reveal the construction and workings of gender. (para. 4)

This definition is built on the work of Lerner who argues, "Women's history, finally, is both a world view and a compensatory strategy for offsetting the male bias of traditional history" (Lerner, 1979, p. xvi). The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs reveals the ways in which identities such as gender influenced her role as an advocacy leader in gifted education. The portrait also provides greater emphasis on the historical contribution of a women to the field of gifted education.

A more recent definition to ground the use of feminist history in this study comes from Damousi's claims that feminist history historicizes the present, emphasizes interdisciplinarity, and connects historical inquiry to contemporary issues (2014). Producing a study in a department of education, using feminist frameworks, from a historical perspective, to create an interdisciplinary portrait enables a richly textured view of Isaacs' life. This view can be used to examine her advocacy efforts as well as the personal and public context that shaped her work. Despite the use of feminist frameworks, this context must go beyond gender. Although feminist history deals explicitly with issues of gender, it equalizes other categories of identity and identifies their multiplicative and complex nature (Zinsser, 2012). This contrasts with the

postmodernist gendered history that focuses on the gender as the primary category of analysis and even seeks to challenge and deconstruct the language of gender (Scott, 1986). Ultimately, feminist history is the ideal frame for this study because of its interdisciplinary nature, focus on the historical context of women's lives, and the role of intersectionality in limiting and expanding the choices and power of women historically (Zinsser, 2012).

The interdisciplinary nature and rich contextualization in feminist history match the chosen method of portraiture's reliance on a relationship between art and science and thorough detailed descriptions (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Further, feminist history's goal of identifying patterns of experience between all women (Lerner, 1979) aligns with Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' emphasis on creating resonance in the portrait (1997). Identifying themes of experience for all women is also a key component of feminist biography (Alpern et al., 1992).

Feminist history's trained view on women does not however flatten the disparate experiences of women who face both oppression and privilege based on status such as race, class, ability, religion, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality (Lerner, 1979). This willingness to examine the similarities among and differences between women allows for the dissonance that is critical for creating the aesthetic whole in portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Examining the life of Isaacs through the frames of her common and dissonant experiences with other women of her time enriches the portrait of her life, contributions, and advocacy for the field of gifted education.

Examining the intersectionality of Isaacs presents a complicated view of her life as an advocacy leader in gifted education.

In addition to the rich and complex view that feminist history takes of historical actors, it is also unique for its inherently political and futurist focus. This futurist focus is also a critical component of the history of gifted education—described in more detail later in this chapter—looking ahead to create change and prevent recurring lived oppressions and marginalization of groups from the past.

One reason historians of women have succeeded in transforming large areas of the discipline of history is the missionary zeal with which they approach their work. They write for today, but they also write for the eternities. A group without history is a group without an identity. By creating a history of women, historians do more than reconstruct the past in new ways. They transform the possibilities in women's present and future. (Sklar, 1992, p. 21)

The urgency of feminist historians matches the urgency of historians of gifted education. Both feminist historians and historians of gifted education identify history's influence of lived experiences in the contemporary period. Both groups also situate their future squarely in recognition of the past and advocacy for the future. This is a shared feature of gifted educational history and feminist history that strengthens the ability of this portrait to influence the field of gifted education beyond a purely academic audience.

Feminist Biography

The conceptual framework of feminist history is significant and broad. Much of feminist history is further separated to examine its unique methodological and periodization signposts. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs is grounded in the smaller conceptual category of feminist biography within feminist history. Building from the rich tradition of feminist and women's history, feminist biography problematizes

traditional historical biography. Typical historical biography follows chronological periodization based on great events and the great men of the past (Lerner, 1979). Feminist biography seeks to uncover the lives of both ordinary and extraordinary women to develop a full historical record of what it meant to be a woman in a particular time and place (Caine, 1994). According to Caine (1994), biographies of women are meant to:

establish the ways in which particular women experienced the girlhood and womanhood of their time, attempting to demonstrate both what was typical and what was exceptional about their individual experience. (p. 252)

This nuanced picture of a historical moment and life are well suited to portraiture which requires aesthetic aspects of production including “dissonant refrains that provide nuance, like shadow; and complex details that evoke the impact of color and the intricacy of texture” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 29).

Considerations of women’s unique experiences are required for a life study including their personal and public lives (Ware, 2012), as well as a challenge of traditional periodization through public events rather than private changes or insights (Lerner, 1979). Feminist biographies must be considered and framed differently than traditional biography (Alpern et al., 1992). Feminist biographies require a deeply personal look at the public and private lives of women and necessitate a reconsideration of the role of biographer/historian into one of qualitative researcher as instrument (Lerner, 1979).

According to Stanley, “any biographer’s view is a socially located and necessarily partial one” (1992, p. 7). The recognition of the subjectivity of a feminist biographer allows for the construction of a qualitative portrait with the portraitist’s and subject’s voices in conversation. The recognition of subjectivity challenges the typical belief in

biography as a wholly truthful and accurate account of the past. Biography is merely a plausible version of what happened based on the researcher's own context and perspective (Stanley, 1992). The recognition of the role of the qualitative researcher in feminist biography aligns with portraiture's emphasis on the explicit voice of the portraitist and enriches the examination of the subject.

The final themes that emerge from feminist biography is the impetus to examine women who were both ahead of and firmly confined within their time and to frame their experiences outside of the typical masculinist historical paradigm. According to Alpern et al., 1992:

Not all of our subjects achieved the kind of celebrity or lasting fame that many male biographical subjects enjoyed...Feminist biographers are not only restoring "invisible" women to the record but enlarging our perspective of the record. (p. 6).

This examination of mundane and remarkable allows for a recognition of the universal within the specific (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Further, looking at women's lives—that have been historically quite different from men's—requires a reassessment of how biography is constructed. Enlarging the historical record and providing a deep examination of women's historical experiences requires a resistance of typical periodization.

The recognition of the ways in which typical historical periodization does not usually fit women's lives is critical to the conceptual frame of feminist biography, "A focus on the female life-cycle experience is yet another aspect of the feminist biographers' consciousness of gender" (Alpern et al., 1992, p. 9). This includes recognition of female friendships, old age, mothering, and dimensions of public/private life (Alpern et al.,

1992). Ultimately, feminist biography challenges the established institution of typical history to create a paradigm that is appropriate for the lives of women. This paradigm is complex and historically contextualized based on each woman's unique lived experiences based on identities such as race, class, age, ability, religion, ethnicity, and gender.

Themes from the Literature: Intersectionality

In 1981, the *American Historical Association* commissioned Gerda Lerner with leading the task to identify how to teach women's history at all levels of education. Despite the title of the field, "women's history," Lerner continuously identified the category of "women" as one very limiting to understanding the half of the world who have historically identified as women.

Women are part of the anonymous in history, but unlike them they have always been part of the ruling elites. Women have always been subordinated to men, at times oppressed, but not quite like either racial or ethnic groups...Unlike other groups which have a group identity and common group interests, women frequently are divided by interests of class, race, or religion from other women. No other group with a common experience has ever been so thoroughly divided within itself. (Lerner, 1981, pp. 13-14)

The intersections of women's identity that divide and unite women in equal measure, as described above by Lerner, is fully realized as theory in Crenshaw's "Mapping the Margins" (1991):

I consider intersectionality a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory. In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race, and gender are essential separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable. (p. 1244)

Crenshaw identifies what Lerner has witnessed through the lens of women's history—that women have qualitatively different experiences based on additional categories of

identity including race, class, gender, ability, ethnicity, and religion. For an authentic portrayal of women in the past, these identities must be considered alongside gender.

When considering feminist history and feminist biography, it is paramount that the entire identity of the individual be considered. This complex view also allows for a rich rendering of a holistic portrait. For the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, multiple parts of her identity are considered for the ways in which they empower and restrict her work as a leader in gifted education and a lifelong advocate for gifted children. Research questions one and three specifically identify intersectionality as a critical component of situating the context of Isaacs and her work as a leading advocate for gifted education.

Intersectionality of Ann Fabe Isaacs

Crenshaw's "Mapping the Margins" (1991) primarily focuses on the intersections of race and gender while acknowledging that "issues such as class, sexual orientation, age" (p. 1245) should also be considered in studies of intersectionality. For the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the following categories of identity are specifically considered: race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, ability, and giftedness.

Despite a Jewish ethnicity, Isaacs' phenotypical American appearance as a White Jewish person provides her with the ability to "pass" as White in American cultural spaces (Baldwin, 1984; Kaye-Kantrowitz, 1991; Levine-Rasky, 2008; Levine-Rasky, 2011; West, 1993). This "passing" is largely simplified throughout American culture despite the recognition from scholars that "Jewish Whiteness is complicated by social mobility, by 'passing' and invisibility, *and* by antisemitism" (Levine-Rasky, 2008, p. 58). Jewishness creates a complicated intersection with class.

Ann Fabe Isaacs' membership in the Cincinnati middle class (in her adult life) reinforces invisible power and privilege. However, the middle class is a moving target—specifically impacted by race, gender, and historical context (Wacquant, 1991). Isaacs' membership in the middle class specifically lends itself to examining the experiences of many similar individuals during the mid-20th century, as belonging to the middle class was typical for American Jews in the mid-20th century (Antler, et al., 2010).

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs sheds light on how much her middle-class Jewish life matched the one critiqued in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and whether that was a hindrance or help to her work as a leader in gifted education (Kaplan & Moore, 2011; Nadell & Sarna, 2001; Rogow, 1993). The role of gender and religion are also specifically considered in Isaacs historical portrait as there has been a long history of Jewish women as reformers and community activists both inside and outside of synagogues (Antler et al., 2010; Goldman, 2001; Kaplan & Moore, 2011; Klapper, 2014; Meyer, 2011; Nadell, 2003a; Nadell, 2004; Nadell & Sarna, 2001; Rogow, 1993; Sheperd, 1993).

In addition to race and class, Isaacs gender and ability influenced her construction of self and of gifted education. Isaacs experienced the world as a leader who was also a woman—a novel concept in the 20th century (Keohane, 2020). Even 70 years after Isaacs founded the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), women leaders continue to face sex discrimination when it comes to moving into and successfully serving in leadership roles (American Association of University Women, 2016).

While womanhood can present a challenge to Isaacs' leadership, ability provides privilege. The disabilities rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s fundamentally changed the experiences of Americans living with disabilities though it did not necessarily change individual minds about people with disabilities (Munyi, 2012). Isaacs' experience of the world as a person without a disability informed her unique perspective. This should be considered especially when framing Isaacs' views of twice-exceptional children and the NAGC. Each of the layers of Isaacs' identity was considered—ability, gender, race, class, religion, and giftedness—for how they influenced her choices to establish the NAGC and devote her public life to advocating for gifted education.

Themes from the Literature: Feminist History & Biography

The research questions guiding the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs are framed based on the study's purpose, the method of portraiture, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The questions are open-ended to allow for authenticity, resonance, and dissonance in a complex aesthetic whole. The specific focus of each question aligns with the themes of feminist history and biography.

Research question one names the intersections of identity and wonders how that shaped Isaacs' role as an advocate for gifted education. This aligns with Lerner's insistence on challenging a unified notion of "women" (1979). Women must be examined holistically. Their lives are more than their gender, particularly with regards to intersections of oppression and privilege based on race, class, ethnicity, ability, age, sexuality, nationality, and religion.

The second research question guiding the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs' specifically addresses themes of feminist biography and the role of women's various identities. The examination of women's public and private lives is critical for a rich portrait and has always been paramount to crafting feminist biographies (Alpern et al., 1992). Therefore, it is essential to examine how Isaacs "negotiated multiple identities as founder and president of NAGC."

The third research question is related to the second, but specifically addresses intersectionality. Although intersectional theory was not named until Crenshaw in 1991, Lerner was describing the principles of intersectionality as a critical component of feminist history and biography as early as 1979. Research question three names the influence of intersecting identities on Isaacs' life work.

Review of Research: History of Gifted Education

Historical research is strengthened by an examination of the subjectivity and contextuality of historical writings. "Historiography examines changes in the methods, interpretations, and conclusions of earlier generations of historians" (Benjamin, 2016, p. 9). Identifying themes and patterns in the writing of the history of gifted education—the historiography of gifted education—is challenging because there are so few voices on the subject—the primary producers are Jolly, Robinson, and Robins—and because many topics have only been considered in a single iteration.

The following section identifies patterns and themes in the historical research on gifted education during the last 50 years. This also provides a general outline for what

historians have identified as the major events in the history of gifted education. This context is essential for examining Isaacs' leadership and advocacy for gifted education.

The two monographs reviewed are the most relevant and recent extensive research into the history of gifted education. These have been considered in detail as they provide the main secondary sources to situate Isaacs' life and work in the field of gifted education. Older monographs on the history of gifted education have been considered in detail by Robins (2010, p. 10). Many of these works neglect the pivotal period of 1940-1960, Robins' focus, which means that the critical early years of Isaacs' work in gifted education—the 1950s—are also missing.

A History of American Gifted Education

Jolly's *A History of American Gifted Education* (2018) is the most thorough conception of gifted education in the U.S. for the past century. Using a typical chronology that is punctuated by leaders in the field and key legislation, this monograph provides a critical introduction to the history of gifted education in the U.S. *A History of American Gifted Education* provides the chronological and contextual foundation for Ann Fabe Isaacs' historical portrait as a leader of the gifted education movement. The following timeline identifies key frameworks and events for examining the history of gifted education. Greater detail is provided for events during Isaacs' lifetime as those are of particular importance to the construction of her portrait.

- Early 20th Century—Lewis Terman pilots the Stanford-Binet IQ Test, begins longitudinal studies of highly gifted children through adulthood, publicly supports Eugenics (Jolly, 2018)

- Early 20th century—Leta Stetter Hollingworth works with and researches the needs of gifted children, publicly supports Eugenics (Jolly, 2018)
- WWII—Increased use of IQ testing to determine “normal” intelligence (Jolly, 2018)
- American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) founded in 1946—First gifted advocacy organization in the U.S., sought to help teachers and parents understand and nurture gifted children (Jolly, 2018)
- National Science Foundation Act of 1950—New focus on rigorous science and math curricula and funding for scientific research particularly for national defense (Jolly, 2018)
- American Psychological Association Annual Presidential Address of 1950—J. P. Guilford called for research into the nature of creativity and to consider a multidimensional view of intelligence (Jolly, 2018)
- The Fund for the Advancement of Education of the Ford Foundation 1951—Established programs that allowed early college entrance (Jolly, 2018)
 - Established the Advanced Placement Program in 1953 (Jolly, 2018)
- *Brown v. Board of Education*—Supreme court case that begun desegregation for schools, desegregation effort would continue for decades across the U.S. (Jolly, 2018)
- National Association for Gifted Children founded in 1954—Ann Fabe Isaacs established this organization as a parent advocate before becoming a researcher (Jolly, 2018)

- Gifted education organizations established a new role of the researcher advocate that designed research to support, and benefit gifted children: Paul Witty, Martin Jenkins, Ruth Strang (Jolly, 2018)
- The *Gifted Child Quarterly* journal of the NAGC established in 1955—First journal exclusively dedicated to research on gifted children and their education (Jolly, 2018)
- National Merit Scholarship Program 1955—Identified high schoolers that would most benefit from a college education, often students were gifted and talented (Jolly, 2018)
- Soviets launch Sputnik 1957—Increased national attention on scientific advancements that would secure global eminence and national defense (Jolly, 2018)
- National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958—Named and impacted gifted and talented children for the first time, acknowledged the potential of these students to support future national defense efforts in math and science, recognized gifted students’ need for differentiated curriculum but only at the secondary level with an emphasis on assistance during the Cold War (Jolly, 2018)
 - Title V of the NDEA included provisions for the identification of gifted and talented students while the field of gifted education and psychologists were questioning the IQ test as the singular and best measure of giftedness (Jolly, 2018)
- 1958—E. Paul Torrance begins researching creativity at the U. of Minnesota (Jolly, 2018)

- Academically Talented Student National Education Association Conference of 1958—Researchers and educators of the gifted gathered to present research, challenges, and a future agenda to support gifted children (Jolly, 2018)
 - Planned before the launch of Sputnik, the space race only intensified the passions and determinations of conference members (Jolly, 2018)
 - Acceleration is chiefly advocated for to support gifted children (Jolly, 2018)
- White House Conference on Education 1960—Emphasis on meeting children’s full potential and attended by the founder of the newly established NAGC, Isaacs (Jolly, 2018)
 - Recommendations from NAGC included requirements for all schools to provide services focused on higher order thinking skills for gifted children, increase in state control of education, additional teacher training on the needs of gifted children, modifications to gifted identification procedures to include diverse and underserved student populations (Jolly, 2018)
- 1963—First Governor’s School established in North Carolina as a public, non-demonstration, school designed for gifted students (Jolly, 2018)
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965—Most far-reaching federal legislation for U.S. education with a focus on reform, federal funding of education, and support for teachers with particular emphasis on closing achievement gaps (Jolly, 2018)
- NAGC Annual Meeting 1967—Proposal of the creatively gifted as a new category of giftedness largely based on Torrance’s research (Jolly, 2018)

- Teaching the Talented 1969—University of Connecticut program designed to educate teachers and leaders on the needs of gifted students and how to best advocate for their needs (Jolly, 2018)
- 1971—Julian Stanley of Johns Hopkins begins a longitudinal study of mathematically precocious youth (Jolly, 2018)
- Marland Report to Congress 1972—Catalogued services offered to gifted students, identified the characteristics of gifted children, and provided concrete steps for congress to take to support and expand gifted programming including funded mandates for gifted identification and programming (Jolly, 2018)
- Office of Gifted and Talented (OGT) 1972—Established because of the Marland Report, though it did not receive any programmatic funds, making it difficult to operationalize its agenda and advocate for gifted children (Jolly, 2018)
 - OGT agenda included raising the priority and provisions of funding for gifted education, identifying, and raising awareness for underserved populations in gifted education, discrepancy of services and responsiveness by states, challenging unfounded beliefs that gifted children do not require differentiated or specialized educational opportunities using gifted advocates’ research agenda, and greater consistency in identification of the gifted with federal leadership. (Jolly, 2018)
- National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented 1972—Training programs designed for state leaders in gifted education to disseminate

information about how to teach and advocate for gifted children, as well as create and bolster gifted programs (Jolly, 2018)

- Education for All Handicapped Children Act 1975—Identified “free and appropriate public education” (FAPE) for all children with disabilities (Jolly, 2018)
 - Gifted leaders disagreed with whether gifted children should be considered “handicapped” with Isaacs strongly against such grouping (Jolly, 2018)
- 1970s—Jacob Javits sought funding for “special projects” for gifted education that was renewed multiple times during the decade (Jolly, 2018)
- 1983—*A Nation at Risk* is published as a federally funded inquiry on American students’ low standardized test scores, gifted advocates and researchers testified on these issues (Jolly, 2018)
 - Recommendations for all students included increased rigor, standards and expectations, the role of teachers, and fiscal support for schools—resulting in the new and current era of increased accountability for teachers and the key role of standardized testing in every state (Jolly, 2018)
 - Support and recommendations for gifted students specifically included state and federal collaboration to meet the needs of gifted student with standard services including acceleration and enrichment (Jolly, 2018)
- 1987—Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Children and Youth Act is ratified by Congress to fund special projects for gifted educators, school districts and researchers, though the act is reauthorized periodically, the funding has been maintained into the contemporary period (Jolly, 2018)

- 1993—*National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* is released by the U.S. Department of Education emphasizing an unnoticed crisis in gifted education as the potential of America's best and brightest is squandered, resulting in the underachievement of many gifted students (Jolly, 2018)
 - Recommendations included setting challenging curricular standards, providing early access to childhood education, more opportunities for underserved populations, a broader definition of giftedness, increased teacher training, and a goal of matching U.S. gifted children's performance with those of the world (Jolly, 2018)

This timeline provides contextual information about the field of gifted education in the U.S. during the time when Isaacs was part of the field. Such context provides a backdrop for understanding Isaacs as an individual and as a leader in gifted education.

A Century of Contributions to Gifted Education: Illuminating Lives

Robinson and Jolly's anthology of key historical figures in the field of gifted education provides the most comprehensive view of Ann Fabe Isaacs' life and contributions to gifted education to date (2014). Published in 2014, *Illuminating Lives* profiled historical leaders in gifted education that had died at least twenty years prior to the publication. The last profile is of Sidney Marland—mentioned in the above timeline for his critical role in generating an agenda and advocacy for gifted education through the Marland report.

The profile of Ann Fabe Isaacs presented by Rogers is a critical piece of broad contextual secondary source information for the historical portrait of her life (2014).

Utilizing Rogers' chapter, *Ann Fabe Isaacs: She Made Our Garden Grow* (2014), the following timeline situates the currently known major events in Isaacs' life as a gifted advocate. Initially, these events were developed from Rogers' 2014 chapter. However, family interviews have provided corrections and changes. Those corrections are included below. Events included in this list were corroborated by archival research.

- 1920—Ann Fabe Isaacs is a first generation American born in Cincinnati Ohio to a low-income Jewish family (Susan & Marjorie Isaacs' interviews 2021 & 2022)
- 1944—Ann earns her early childhood education B.A. from the University of Cincinnati (Rogers, 2014)
- 1945-1950—Ann works for the Hamilton County Welfare Department as a psychologist (Rogers, 2014)
- 1950—M.A. from Xavier University focused on counseling, guidance, educational foundations, and administration (Rogers, 2014)
- 1950-1960—Begins a doctorate at Ohio State University with an emphasis on psychological foundations, counseling, and administration (Rogers, 2014)
- 1950-1957—Founds and runs the Personality Development Preschool (Rogers, 2014)
 - Ann provided Stanford-Binet Intelligence tests to students and confirmed that many were gifted (Rogers, 2014)
 - Notices gifted children fail to progress or underachieve after leaving preschool (Rogers, 2014)
- 1952—Ann founds the Ohio Association for Gifted and Talented (Isaacs, 1952)

- 1954-1959—Ann names herself president of the NAGC and uses matching letterhead to respond to teacher and parent inquiries about gifted children and gifted education (Rogers, 2014)
- 1957—Articles of incorporation are signed by Ann, James Stover, Paul Rollings, and Zarita Schwartz, all from Cincinnati (Rogers, 2014)
- 1957—Established the *Gifted Child Quarterly* journal and first national conference (Rogers, 2014)
 - Initially called *Gifted Child Newsletter*, was very brief and fully written by Ann (Rogers, 2014)
 - Conference was co-sponsored with the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (Rogers, 2014)
 - Ann serves as Editor in Chief of the *GCQ* until her departure from the organization in 1974 (Isaacs, 1957d; Isaacs, 1974a)
- 1958—Officially the *Gifted Child Quarterly (GCQ)* and each issue was 30 pages (Rogers, 2014)
- 1962—*GCQ* issues are over 100 pages in length, and all contain at least one article by Ann and one by E. Paul Torrance, typically Torrance is the first article (Box 4 & 5 of the American Jewish Archives)
- 1970—Ann does not collaborate with The Association for the Gifted (TAG) to include gifted children under the federal education of the handicapped labeling and funding scheme and speaks out against such grouping (Rogers, 2014)

- 1975—Ann publishes the book *How to Teach Ourselves to be Good to One Another* within an issue of the *Quarterly* (Isaacs, 1974d)
- 1974—NAGC and *GCQ* leadership removed Ann, though she was given the title Executive Director Emeritus and was considered retired rather than discharged (Rogers, 2014)
- 1974—Ann founds the National Association for Creative Children and Adults (NACCA) and establishes the *Creative Child and Adult Quarterly (CCAQ)* journal with Torrance (Rogers, 2014)
- 1978—Through *CCAQ*, Ann proposes a new model for Gifted-Talented-Creative (GTC) (Rogers, 2014)
- 1984—Ann steps down from NACCA and *CCAQ* responsibilities (Rogers, 2014)
 - She is interviewed by the new editor of *CCAQ* and primarily discusses her musical aspirations and development (Rogers, 2014)
- 2001—Ann Fabe Isaacs dies in Cincinnati, Ohio (Rogers, 2014)
- 2002—First Ann Fabe Isaacs Founders’ Memorial Award is presented by her husband at the annual NAGC conference (Rogers, 2014)

These events provide a frame from which to examine Isaacs’ life and contributions as they related to the field of gifted education. This chronology situates the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs and her contributions to the field of gifted education.

Brief Recent Studies of the History of Gifted Education

A recent article on the history of the field of gifted education frames important figures in the field historically as the cause for underrepresentation and equity issues in the

contemporary field (Sternberg et al., 2021). The study considers itself “A brief and selective history of the gifted-child movement” (Sternberg et al., 2021). Selected leaders seem to be primarily those who supported Eugenics, chosen to argue against their harmful philosophies that have undergirded the field of gifted education (Sternberg et al., 2021). To contrast these figures, the authors argue, “No one has to think a certain way because of the time in which they lived” (Sternberg et al., 2021, p. 228). And then presented a single figure, Martin D. Jenkins, who had much more progressive views on race and intelligence than his contemporaries (Sternberg et al., 2021, p. 228). Such overtly political expositions of the history of gifted education provide cause for the researcher to create an authentic and complex portrait of the founder of the NAGC.

Jolly’s *Foundations of the Field of Gifted Education* (2005) identifies the critical role of history for informing future research and advocacy, “historical perspective is necessary so that present-day contributions can be properly and accurately recognized” (p. 14). In this article, Jolly looks past the most well-researched historical leaders of the field—Terman and Hollingworth—instead highlighting other lesser-known contributors with brief biographies.

Francis Galton—who is well represented in the gifted historical literature, Alfred Binet, Cesare Lombroso, Alfred Yoder, and James McKeen Cattell are all considered for their neglect in histories of gifted education, as well as their key contributions to the field (Jolly, 2005). The identification of neglected persons in history is like feminist/women’s history impulse to uncover our “lost sisters” (Lerner, 1979). However, the impulse to primarily recognize men is not aligned feature of women’s or feminist history.

Related to *Foundations* (Jolly, 2005), *Pioneering Definitions and Theoretical Positions in the Field of Gifted Education*, continues an examination of researchers and practitioners to the field of gifted education. Jolly provides brief biographies of Lulu Stedman (2006), Leta Stetter Hollingworth (2005b), Lewis Terman (2008), and Guy M. Whipple (2007). The theoretical positions of these four leaders are considered—particularly with respect to their empirical definitions of giftedness—where there was divergence and convergence (Jolly, 2005b). The legacy of these conceptions is then connected to contemporary understandings of giftedness and competing definitions (Jolly, 2005b)—maintaining the use of gifted educational history for examining present challenges in the field of gifted education.

Jolly has also published slightly longer biographies of lesser-known leaders in gifted education. These limited biographical sketches by Jolly (2007) consider Guy M. Whipple, Sidney P. Marland (Jolly, 2009b), Paul A. Witty (Jolly & Bruno, 2010), Florence L. Goodenough (Jolly, 2010) and James J. Gallagher (Jolly & Robinson, 2014). Key findings from these biographical sketches include the impetus to recognize men in the field who have historically led gifted education advocacy and research efforts. These short biographies also emphasized the need to use the historical record of gifted education to inform research agendas and advocacy today.

Witty's sentiments are still relevant today, as those in the field continue to promote the needs of gifted children to educators, legislators, and other stakeholders. There also is an ongoing movement to seek out appropriate identification measures for underserved gifted children and expand the conception of giftedness. (Jolly & Bruno, 2010, p. 17)

A primary goal of the history of gifted education is to contextualize the work of historical advocates in the contemporary moment. Learning lessons from the past is a critical theme in the history of gifted education.

Jolly's *A Resuscitation of Gifted Education* (2009a) recognizes the need for historical inquiry into the field of gifted education. Emphasis is placed on the National Defense Education Act, conceptions of giftedness, creativity, educational programming for the gifted, and teachers of the gifted (Jolly, 2009a). Jolly cites the future of gifted education's inextricable link to the past—even during periods of seeming lulls in gifted activism, there has been ongoing research that is used to support gifted children today (2009a). The return to activism through historical examination remains a key part of most historical inquiry on gifted education.

Stoeger's chapter, *The History of Giftedness Research* (2009) examines the changing conceptions and definitions of giftedness in the past 100 years. The empirical definitions of intelligence, creativity, and talent development are primarily considered (Stoeger, 2009). Stoeger follows the impetus on IQ testing, then the multi-dimensional conceptions of giftedness, and finally a critical eye toward the cultural construction of giftedness and how this creates barriers to identifying gifted students from non-dominant groups (2009). Stoeger concludes with a call for examining which definitions of giftedness should endure and how to support these definitions through empirical research (2009). Again, history is used to determine a future research agenda.

Robins and Jolly's *Historical Perspectives: The Establishment of Advocacy Organizations* (2013) provides a very brief consideration of the founding of the first two

gifted advocacy organizations in the U.S.—the American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) and the NAGC. Ann Fabe Isaacs’ is briefly considered for her critical role in founding NAGC and the importance of these two organizations in establishing the field of gifted education that exists today (Robins & Jolly, 2013). Ultimately, Robins and Jolly highlight the key role that advocacy organizations have both historically, and today, provided much needed advocacy and direction for gifted advocates and researchers (2013).

The *Development of gifted education and an overview of gifted education in the USA, Canada, Equator, and Mexico* (Reid, 2015) primarily charts the history of gifted education in the U.S. including conceptions of giftedness, characteristics of gifted students and key historical events to the history of gifted education. The history is then used to contextualize gifted education in the contemporary period (Reid, 2015). The far-reaching topics of Reid’s research are limited by the space which is devoted to them—7 pages. Such limited excursions into the history of gifted education are frequent, demonstrating the need for a deeper look at historical figures and moments within the timeline of gifted education.

Robinson’s chapter, *An Eventful Modern History of Gifted Education*, (2018) provides a broad overview of gifted education in the past 100 years. The historical leaders of gifted education, key legislation, and publications are cited as critical for examining the field of gifted education today (Robinson, 2018). Robinson (2018) explicitly ties historical inquiry into gifted education to contemporary challenges, “historical analysis is a viable area of inquiry that can inform current practice” (p. 22).

Themes from the Literature: History of Gifted Education

The history of gifted education has an impulse to focus on changing conceptions of giftedness and the first half of the 20th century. The reiteration of the same historical precedents—the development of IQ testing, Lewis Terman’s Termites, and his eugenicist ideals—has left gaps about the latter half of the 20th century in gifted educational history (Robins, 2010). Further, the impulse to focus on a broad rendering of the history of gifted education neglects key details and individuals that are critical to a thorough examination of the history of gifted education. According to Robins (2010):

Most of these investigations provide only an overview of the field, thus not providing an entirely clear picture of how gifted education has grown since its beginnings. There is specifically a dearth of information found regarding the years between 1940 and 1960—the years leading up to and immediately following Sputnik. (pp. 8-9)

This neglect of certain periods of gifted educational history, and lack of depth into the research are present within the review of research.

The lack of depth in the research on the history of gifted education is compounded by a limited interest for researchers of studying the history of gifted education. This results in a small number of recently published research from an even smaller group of scholars. One historian cannot tell the entire history of gifted education alone. Within the biographical research in the history of gifted education especially, the information is very limited except for the earliest and most well-known father and mother of American gifted education—Lewis Terman and Leta Stetter Hollingworth.

Contemporary biographies of historical gifted education leaders have primarily considered by a single researcher, Jolly, and the subjects have been primarily men. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs adds depth and complexity to the study of the

history of gifted education in the U.S. overall and specifically provides recognition of women in the field of gifted education.

An additional theme within the history of gifted education is the futurist focus of the historical inquiry. This lens informs the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The history of gifted education always has an eye to the present with considerations of what we can and must learn from the past to inform future directions. This futurist use of history is frequently condemned by traditional historians (Staley, 2007). However, in a very practical field, such as education, such use is acceptable and warranted. The use of futurist thinking as applied to historical phenomena is critical to the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs, and particularly research question four: How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education? This question can provide guidance for contemporary advocates through the context of Isaacs' life and work for the field of gifted education.

Review of Research: Advocacy for Gifted Education

Robins and Jolly's *Historical Perspectives: The Establishment of Advocacy Organizations* (2013), provides a brief 3-page, consideration of the founding of the NAGC and the AAGC (American Association for Gifted Children) and how advocacy has been considered historically in gifted education. Robins and Jolly situate this historical work through the lens of contemporary advocacy efforts for gifted education. According to Jolly and Robins (2018):

The internet has exponentially expanded the interconnectivity between researchers, educators, and parents and changed the way in which advocacy occurs, especially with the use of social media including blogs where information can be exchanged in real time. However, in a time where printed journals, newsletters, postal mail, and

annual meetings were the main conduits of information, two organizations emerged as leading advocates for gifted children. (p. 139)

The continued need for advocacy and urgency on the part of the supporters of gifted children is essential to the field of gifted education.

In 2003, an entire issue of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* was devoted to advocacy, and more recent research on advocacy for gifted education continues to be produced. NAGC has also made advocacy a significant priority in their work to support gifted children. NAGC has published numerous resources on how to advocate as a parent or teacher and how to advocate at the local, state, and national level (2021a). The NAGC annual Leadership and Advocacy Conference also demonstrates the advocacy priority in gifted education. NAGC's contemporary focus on advocacy, and their preferred strategies, are a critical point of examination with the advocacy efforts and strategies employed by Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Advocates

Advocacy in the field of gifted education is specialized for the type of advocate, parent, student, administrator, teacher, or researcher. This allows for very practical guidance on how to make the most of the limited time and resources for advocates. The numerous resources freely available online make advocacy incredibly accessible for those with an internet connection and some time to read. However, not all families have this privilege, which is why much of advocacy work continues to target researchers and teachers who have dedicated their lives to this field. These researchers and teachers are often the ones most committed to creating and sharing publicly accessible resources for parents and community members to utilize when advocating.

Examining the role of different advocates and how the field informs and is informed by their work is critical for situating Ann Fabe Isaacs' own advocacy work. In addition, Isaacs' life provides key information for situating how advocacy work gets started, an important area of research today (Community Toolbox, 2021; Lewis, 2008; Roberts & Inman, 2020). Isaacs was certainly an advocate for gifted education, but who did she also encourage advocacy work from—researchers, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, students? This question is considered through the frame of research question 4: How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education? This question is supported in the research protocol through examination of Isaacs as a possible parent advocate, teacher advocate, counselor advocate, and researcher advocate. As a result of these specific identity frames of Isaacs as an advocate, those sections of the gifted education advocacy research have been emphasized.

Parent Advocates

Parents have a unique position that allows them to advocate for gifted students at the school, district, state, and national level (NAGC, 2021b). Parent advocacy is a strength of the gifted education community, and it is essential for practically all gifted children—particularly those from underrepresented populations. Joy Lawson Davis, a prominent advocate for equitable gifted education, emphasizes the need for families of color to advocate for their gifted children specifically (2014):

Not unlike parents of other special needs students, parents of high ability and gifted students of color may often be the initiator of services when districts neglect to provide an appropriate educational setting for their advanced learners. In this role, parents are placed in the difficult position of having to request specific services or negotiate for appropriate instructional options that are sometimes not readily available. (p. 228)

The NAGC website is a helpful hub for parent advocates as it provides tip sheets on how to work with the teacher, research to support specific classroom strategies, and state guidelines for gifted education (2021b). Practical advice for parents working with teachers includes how to build lasting relationships with classroom teachers, diplomatic strategies, shared responsibilities, and student advocacy, as well as how to create practical timelines for solution implementation (Brulles & Brown, 2016; Gilman, 2008; Inman & Kirchner, 2016; Rogers, 2002; Smutny, et al., 2016).

Parents are also encouraged to advocate collectively through parent support groups supported through the NAGC and another contemporary national gifted organization, Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) (NAGC, 2021b; Sheard, 2013). SENNG's parent support groups seek to empower families (Sheard, 2013). Empowerment includes advocacy tools specific to gifted students emotional and holistic wellbeing (Sheard, 2013). SENNG specifically recommends advocating from a place of empathy by sharing gifted students' experiences at school and collaborating with the classroom teacher by recognizing the constraints on the teachers' time and abilities (Sheard, 2013). This is an ideal first step when parents take on the role of advocate for their gifted child.

Parents typically begin an advocacy journey with the classroom teacher (NAGC, 2021b; Roberts & Inman, 2020). This can be the beginning of a powerful collective advocacy group (Roberts, 2014). Based on teacher responses, parent advocacy escalates based on positive experiences—parents are successful and want to continue working on behalf of more gifted students—or on negative experiences—classroom teacher advocacy

did not work, and they need to take the issue up the chain (NAGC, 2021b; Smutny et al., 2016).

Parents have been successful advocates for gifted education beyond their classroom teacher, however. As South Dakota's gifted programming and policy was under attack at the state level, parent advocacy played a vital role in protecting the Custer School District's gifted program (Kennedy, 2003):

The written proposal for program restructuring and expansion was a direct result of parent discussions with the superintendent and the program coordinator. Parent initiative was essential, particularly because of the rescission of the state mandate for gifted programming and the perceived budget crisis. The initiative was unlikely to come from any other source under these circumstances. (p. 92)

The initiative of parents is invaluable to advocacy efforts for gifted education (Robinson & Moon, 2003). Further, the ability of parents to collaborate with researchers, teachers, and educational leaders for gifted children has resulted in profound gains at the local and state levels for gifted children, particularly in states where gifted education has faced repeated attacks (Robinson & Moon, 2003). Considering the critical role of parent advocates, the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs examines how she navigated her identity as a parent and an advocate for gifted children.

Teacher Advocates

Teachers play a vital role in their ability to identify what gifted children need from a practical and research-based lens. Teachers can advocate at their school site as well as at the district, state, and national levels to create better resources, policies, and programming for gifted students (Besnoy, 2005; Burney & Sheldon, 2010; Lanham, 2010; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Siegle, 2012). According to Roberts and Siegle

(2012), “A common phrase among advocates is, ‘if you are not at the table, you are on the menu.’ Educators must be at the table advocating for the needs of gifted students” (p. 61).

The role of educators as advocates for gifted education cannot be overstated (Wiskow et al., 2010). According to Wiskow et al. (2011, p. 23), “The first type of active advocacy begins with teachers who serve as effective advocates in gifted education.” A critical initial step of teacher advocates includes public relations efforts to correct misconceptions of gifted children and gifted education (Besnoy, 2005). Robinson and Moon (2003) term this “advocacy for acceptance” which requires teachers to work with their colleagues inside and outside of their schools to increase accurate information about gifted children and gifted education.

An additional frame for teacher advocacy is consideration of one’s audience. Kaplan emphasizes knowing one’s audience when advocating (2003). Motivation, scaffolding, metacognition, and transfer are used to frame the audience’s perspective and perception of the information provided from the gifted advocate (Kaplan, 2003). Teachers are remarkable advocates for gifted students at all levels of education—from the classroom to policymaking (Roberts & Siegle, 2012). However, from the research the impetus for teachers of the gifted is advocating within their own schools (Besnoy, 2005). Further, this advocacy is strengthened when it comes from a range of stakeholders, including parents (Roberts, 2014). According to Besnoy (2005), the need has been and continues to be immediate:

The current trend of cutting and slashing funding for gifted education from state budgets is a call to action for all educators of the gifted. This watershed moment must

be addressed with a proactive grassroots vision because the greatest effects will be felt at the most basic level: the local schools. (p. 32)

Teachers can support this basic level of advocacy informally through conversations with colleagues as well as formally by outwardly utilizing public communications strategies (Besnoy, 2005). Teachers are also in the unique position of providing student instruction concerning self-advocacy (Cohen, 2014; Douglas, 2003; Prater et al., 2014).

Examining Ann Fabe Isaacs' use of advocacy strategies from the teacher perspective yields insights into how she promoted advocacy for gifted education more broadly. Despite Isaacs' focus on national advocacy, as the founder of a national advocacy organization for gifted children, she was also a local community member and the founder of a neighborhood preschool. Isaacs' also responded to teachers' personal requests for advocacy strategies and support (Rogers, 2013)—giving her a unique perspective from multiple levels of advocacy. The role of teacher advocate and advocate leader makes Isaacs a critical person to examine.

School Psychologist/Counselor Advocates

In addition to Isaacs' role as a teacher and parent, Isaacs also worked as a psychologist and gave the Stanford-Binet IQ test to her preschool students (Rogers, 2014). The role of psychologists as advocates for gifted education is frequent in contemporary research. Psychologists and school counselors have a special role to play when it comes to supporting the holistic well-being of gifted students (Stephens, 2020). With a background in psychology and counseling, Isaacs' viewed gifted children through this lens.

The unique positionality of counselors has continued the tradition of Isaacs’—the psychologist/counselor advocate for gifted children. A recent study identified the ways in which school psychologists understand gifted education policy and how they can advocate for expansion of programming within their school settings (Stephens, 2020). Looking beyond site-based advocacy for gifted students reveals the unique position of school counselors and psychologists to support the needs of gifted students from many levels (Stephens, 2020). However, just as parents and teachers face uphill advocacy battles for gifted education, the same challenges present themselves for school psychologists.

The challenge for school psychologists and counselors as gifted advocates is reinforced by the lack of a federal definition or guidelines for gifted identification and programming (Robertson et al., 2011; Stephens, 2020). School psychologists play a vital role when it comes to identifying and supporting the social and emotional needs of gifted children, as well as helping others—parents and teachers specifically—support their needs (Colangelo & Wood, 2015; Robertson et al., 2011; Robinson, 2002). In the case of gifted students from underrepresented populations and those without parents who can devote significant time and resources to advocating for their child’s education, the role of the school counselor/psychologist becomes paramount (Robinson, 2002).

The knowledge of the psychologist as assessor and provider of social emotional support provides a unique lens:

As the professional who is likely to have the most comprehensive picture of the student and the educational alternatives, the psychologist is often in a special position to act as an advocate in partnership with parents and teachers. *The psychologist who*

submits a test report without playing such a role has done only half the job.
(Robinson, 2002, p. 27)

Like the role of the parent and the teacher, the school counselor/psychologist is the most effective advocate when they collaborate with stakeholders (Colangelo & Wood, 2015; Pfeiffer, 2012; Robertson et al., 2011; Robinson, 2002; Shaunessy-Dedrick & Lazarou, 2020; Stephens, 2020). Considering Ann Fabe Isaacs' role as a parent, teacher, and psychologist/counselor, it is vital to examine the layers of advocacy that exist for different stakeholders in gifted education.

Advocating for Special Groups

The impetus to advocate is echoed at the local and national levels of gifted education and all stakeholders are encouraged to be advocates. However, the field of gifted education makes clear that advocacy is not one size fits all. Gifted students from underrepresented populations, and their advocates, face unique challenges based on the intersections of their identity. Like Crenshaw's argument that Black women experience violence differently than White women because of their race (1991), gifted students who experience oppression in addition to their giftedness also have unique challenges (Davis, 2014). Examining the ways that advocates are told to support these students is foundational for situating the advocacy work of Ann Fabe Isaacs. Addressing how she did or did not advocate for students from underrepresented populations enables the creation of a holistic historical portrait.

Twice-Exceptional Students

Twice-exceptional students have received special attention in advocacy circles as these students operate under truly unique constraints from the structures of schools as

well as teacher perceptions (Reis et al., 2014; Trail, 2011). School counselors have a particular interest in this group and consider advocating for these students “an ethical obligation” (Leggett et al., 2010). The call to action among researchers of twice-exceptional students is simple:

It is clear that our schools are not adequately meeting the needs of twice exceptional (twice-exceptional) students. To ensure that our twice-exceptional students are receiving appropriate education, professionals and parents must advocate that each student receives a meaningful Individualized Educational program. (Weinfeld, 2018, para. 1)

Unfortunately, this call to action is not easily met by researchers, teachers, legislators, or parents.

A 2015 study of twice-exceptional elementary student parents demonstrated that advocating for their student can feel like a full-time job that they are ill-equipped to manage (Besnoy et al., 2015). Building coalitions with a variety of stakeholders results in greater success for these advocates (Roberts, 2014). Parents, teachers, and counselors can collaborate to support the unique needs of twice-exceptional children and advocate for increased understanding, resources, and programming (Assouline et al., 2006; Kaufman, 2018; NAGC, 2021h).

Advocating for twice-exceptional students does come with advantages however, as these students are protected and served under federal legislation—the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Hafenstein, 2020; Weinfeld, 2018). The major state and supreme court rulings in favor of twice-exceptional children come from the lens of their disability, rather than their giftedness however (Hafenstein, 2020; Weinfeld, 2018). In some states, Pennsylvania, and Florida particularly, gifted children are considered part

of special education and receive increased funding and oversight based on this grouping (Hafenstein, 2020).

The vital role of policy is foundational to gifted education advocacy (CAGT, 2021; Clarenbach & Eckert, 2018; Davidson Institute, 2021; Islas, 2016; Plucker, 2012; Plucker et al., 2017; Stephens, 2018; Stephens, 2020; Subotnik & Rickoff, 2010; Swanson, 2007; VanTassel-Baska, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, 2018; Woods, 2016) and twice-exceptional students provide a unique opportunity for advocates to extend rulings and policy, through the lens of special education, on behalf of gifted children (Hafenstein, 2020).

Contemporary federal legislation to identify, protect, and serve special education students emerged while Ann Fabe Isaacs was very active with NAGC (Rogers, 2013). The historical portrait of Isaacs provides increased context for examining how/if gifted children were left out of the national conversation of special education.

Gifted Students of Color

Like the experiences of twice-exceptional students and parents, many gifted students of color struggle to have their needs met in the K-12 school setting (Davis, 2014; Ford, 2002; Ford, 2013; Ford & King, 2014; Ritchotte et al., 2020). A recurrent theme in advocacy for gifted children includes the necessity of all stakeholders' involvement and support for advocacy (Besnoy et al., 2015; Gilman, 2008; Lee & Green, 2020; Lewis, 2008; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2020; Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). Lee and Green's article on collective advocacy to support gifted students of color provides practical strategies for parents, administrators, and teachers (2020). According to Lee and Green:

Gifted students, particularly gifted students of color and linguistically diverse students, need a supportive educational community, consisting of parents, educators, and administrators, to demand opportunities to develop their potential and provide services that address their individual needs. (p. 14)

Advocacy for a foundational culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy grounds the work of gifted advocates for equity (Davis, 2014; Lee & Green, 2020; Ritchotte et al., 2020). An understanding of racial identity development and systemic White supremacy in public schools is the starting place for identifying the needs of gifted children of color (Ford, 2002; Ford, 2013; Ford & King, 2014; Ford et al., 2011).

In many cases, the struggle for equitable gifted education goes even further than simply making identification equitable. Retention of gifted students of color in gifted programs has become a major focus of gifted advocacy for equity (Belleza, 2012; Ford, 2002; Ford, 2013; Ford, 2017; Ford & Whiting, 2008; Ford et al., 2011; Moore et al., 2005; Ritchotte et al., 2020). The challenges faced by gifted students and families of color are unique, but still share some universal elements with respect to the lack of unified programming and funding for gifted students in the U.S.

Low-Income Gifted Students

Gifted students from underrepresented populations often face multiple identities of oppression which often results in microaggressions (Stambaugh & Ford, 2014). The impact of classism, nationalism, and racism on gifted children is significant in how they are identified for gifted services, what services they receive, and how their potential is encouraged (Ford, 2013; Ritchotte et al., 2020). For low-income students in particular, advocates for gifted children must re-educate individuals on the gifted child and help them see beyond the stereotypical middle class gifted family (Friedman, 2010). This

similarity is shared across advocacy levels and among special populations—re-education of what gifted education is and who gifted students are, is necessary at all levels (Kaplan, 2003).

NAGC published a free, open-access research-based resource to support high achievement for low-income gifted students by Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach in 2012. This resource itself is useful for advocacy, and it can be used by parents and teachers, as it recommends best practices for identifying and developing talent in students who are low-income (Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012). Across the field of gifted education, gifted students living in low-income households are a key area of interest for researchers (Goings & Ford, 2018).

For the experiences of many low-income students, the space for parent advocacy is at the very starting line—working with counselors, psychologists, teachers, and school districts for equitable identification practices before programming options can even be considered (Grissom et al., 2019). The recurrent theme of the need for collaboration between stakeholders is confirmed when advocating for low-income gifted students. This theme is undergirded by an initial, foundational struggle for gifted advocates—lack of federal legislation on gifted education.

Unified Advocacy Agenda

Providing a unified message is essential to effective advocacy (Besnoy, 2005; Kaplan, 2003; Roberts, 2014). Unfortunately, gifted advocates are easily kept separate from each other across the U.S. by the vastly different policies, services, definitions, and identification practices in each state (Hafenstein, 2020). To bridge these differences, a

primary advocacy goal as determined by the NAGC is getting appropriate policies for gifted education (Islas, 2016; NAGC, 2021c; NAGC, 2021e). The NAGC strategic framework, adopted in 2016 states that the organization will, “advocate for the adoption of policies that promote programs and services in which gifted and talented children will thrive” (Islas, 2016).

The legal standing, or lack thereof, of gifted education at federal, state, and local levels perpetuates a need for ongoing advocacy efforts (Hafenstein, 2020). Federal legislation and funding would not solve all gifted education’s problems, but it would create common language—a vital component of advocacy that the special education movement can rely on due to the normative language created by IDEA (Hafenstein, 2020).

The emphasis on advocating for policy change is reinforced with the NAGC’s annual opportunity to speak with the nation’s leaders about the importance of gifted education at their annual Leadership & Advocacy Conference. The 2018 *Fundamentals of Gifted Education* anthology also has an entire chapter devoted to gifted policy (Clarenbach & Eckert). According to Kettler:

Gifted education hovers anxiously on the periphery of educational policy, practice, and priority. There are no federal mandates for gifted education programs and services. Only about half of the states at any given time have policies requiring gifted education, and in many of those, there are no evaluation and accountability mechanisms to incent quality. (2016, p. ix)

The legislative neglect of gifted children across the U.S. makes advocacy for gifted education a requirement for those in the field and the families and supporters of gifted children.

The lack of federal policies supporting gifted education creates barriers to services (Hafenstein, 2020; Gentry, et al., 2019; Roberts, 2014). The lack of federal policy also establishes a clear message about the value of gifted education.

The absence of federal legislation that includes gifted children sends a negative message about the level of importance in addressing the needs of children with gifts and talents. (Roberts, 2014, p. 66)

Gallagher reiterates the philosophical and historical foundations of such a struggle and the ways in which advocates have historically worked to challenge the lack of federal funding for gifted education (2015).

Ann Fabe Isaacs realized the unique and unmet needs of gifted children early in her career and spent decades of her life advocating for the needs of gifted children. Considering that the NAGC was established and active during the period when legislation such as IDEA was being considered and implemented, the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs examines coterminous events that may have excluded gifted children from federal legislation.

An additional theme in gifted education advocacy is the role of collaboration and relationship building (Gilman, 2008; Kaplan, 2003; Lanham, 2010; Lee & Green, 2020; Lewis, 2008; Mersino, 2010; NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021e; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Inman, 2020; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Robinson, 2020; Robinson & Moon, 2003; Robinson, 2002; Sheard, 2003; Stephens, 2020; Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). In most cases, it is only through multilayered advocacy efforts that services for gifted students are secured and maintained (Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). Whether an underrepresented group of gifted children is being

advocated for, and whether the advocate has a PhD or just an internet connection, collaboration is key (Mofield & Phelps, 2021; Robinson, 2003; Tomlinson, et al., 1996). The research is clear—the more that stakeholders in gifted education can work together to achieve a common goal, the more successful they are.

Advocacy is important at all levels. Parents often advocate for a child at the classroom level. Some parents focus on the school level, while others set their advocacy sights at the school district level. Advocacy also is essential at the state and national levels. (Roberts, 2014, p. 65)

Among the prescriptions for collaboration are additional best practices of advocacy that inform the field today. Roberts' 2014 overview of the levels and types of advocacy are listed below as a form of best practices. These practices were specifically considered when examining the life of Ann Fabe Isaacs. Her relationship with each of these types of advocacy sheds light on how and why she founded the NAGC and her hopes for the organization as well as the field of gifted education broadly. The types and strategies for advocacy (Roberts, 2014) grounds the oral history interview protocol, in chapter three, that address research question four. Types of Advocacy:

- Advocacy for resources—Securing funding for gifted education whether it is secured nationally, state by state, or locally (Roberts, 2014)
- Advocacy for law and policy—Laws, rules, and guidelines explicitly mandating and describing gifted education at national, state, and local levels (Roberts, 2014)
- Advocacy for excellence—Opportunities for all children to achieve at their highest levels of ability and fulfill their full potential (Roberts, 2014)

- Advocacy for special schools—Specialized institutions for gifted and talented students to develop their gifts and talents more fully; public funding for such schools is a priority (Roberts, 2014)
- Advocacy for gifted students from underrepresented populations—Equitable identification procedures and high standards for all gifted students that begins with talent development at a young age (Roberts, 2014)

Recognizing the multi-faceted and complex nature of advocacy work is critical to the examination of how and why Isaacs devoted her life to certain types of advocacy and particular agenda items for gifted education rather than others. The specific strategies considered in the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs have also been named by Roberts (2014), they include the following tenets of advocacy that apply and are practiced beyond even the field of gifted education. Principles for Effective Advocacy:

- Clear and consistent advocacy messaging across the field or organization (Roberts, 2014)
- Single, unified source for channeling communication across organizations (Roberts, 2014)
- Welcoming of new friendships and allies with shared and often indirect interests (Roberts, 2014)
- Informed and knowledgeable about how to gather information to advance a campaign (Roberts, 2014)
- Relationships are developed before they are needed and sustained regardless of outcomes (Roberts, 2014)

- Vigilance for ever-present threats and/or unexpected opportunities (Roberts, 2014)

Ultimately, the types of advocacy and principles for effective advocacy presented by Roberts (2014) ground the analysis of Isaacs' advocacy work as part of the NAGC.

Themes from the Literature: Advocacy for Gifted Education

Advocacy is a paramount topic in the field of gifted education that permeates all levels of the field, from academic researchers and teachers to parents and children, and has long been important to the field (Burney & Sheldon, 2010; Besnoy et al., 2015; Besnoy, 2005; Cohen, 2014; Costis, 2016; Davis, 2014; Douglas, 2003; Gilman, 2008; Kaplan, 2003; Lanham, 2010; Lee & Green, 2020; Legett et al., 2010; Lewis, 2008; Mersino, 2010; NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021e; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Inman, 2020; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Robins & Jolly, 2013; Robinson & Moon, 2003; Robinson & Moon, 2002; Sheard, 2013; Smutny et al., 2016; Stevens, 2020; Weinfeld, 2018; Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). Themes from gifted advocacy research include an impetus toward practicality and the best practices for advocates from various stakeholder positions (Besnoy, 2005; Burney & Sheldon, 2010; CAGT, 2021; Cohen, 2014; Community Tool Box, 2021; Davis, 2014; Douglas, 2003; Gilman, 2008; Kaplan, 2003; Lanham, 2010; Lee & Green, 2020; Lewis, 2008; Mersino, 2010; NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021e; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Inman, 2020; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Robinson & Moon, 2003; Robinson, 2002; Sheard, 2013; Smutny et al., 2016; Stephens, 2020; Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). Advocacy resources are freely available to all who want to

advocate for gifted children in everyday language from the NAGC website (NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b).

In addition, much formal research for gifted education advocacy is targeted to specific groups of advocates or specific groups of gifted children—low-income, twice-exceptional, English language learners, and gifted students of color all receive special attention in the advocacy literature (Besnoy et al., 2015; Costis, 2016; Davis, 2014; Ford & Whiting, 2008; Gay, 1978; Grantham, 2013; Grisson et al., 2019; Hughes, 2011; Kaufman, 2018; Klinger, 2022; Lee & Green, 2020; Leggett et al., 2010; Maynes et al., 2014; NAGC, 2021d; NAGC, 2021e; NAGC, 2021h; Park, 2018; Reis et al., 2014; Ritchotte et al., 2020; Roberts, 2014; Stambaugh & Ford, 2014; Trail, 2011; Weinfeld, 2018). Finally, the advocates in question also guide the framing of why and how to advocate for gifted education—parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, legislators, researchers, and even gifted students are provided with the specialized tools to support their unique stakeholder position for the cause of gifted children (Besnoy, 2005; Burney & Sheldon, 2010; CAGT, 2021; Cohen, 2014; Community Tool Box, 2021; Davis, 2014; Douglas, 2003; Gilman, 2008; Kaplan, 2003; Lanham, 2010; Lee & Green, 2020; Lewis, 2008; Mersino, 2010; NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021e; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Inman, 2020; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Robinson & Moon, 2003; Robinson, 2002; Sheard, 2013; Smutny et al., 2016; Stephens, 2020; Wiskow et al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011).

In addition to the customizability of advocacy lessons and audiences for gifted education, the field looks to change policies on gifted education which includes creating

federal and state policy to support gifted education (Brown et al., 2006; Davidson Institute, 2021; Gallagher, 2015; Gentry et al., 2019; Stevens, 2018; Swanson, 2007; VanTassel-Baska, 2009; VanTassel-Baska, 2018; Woods, 2016). The NAGC also heralds the call to effect policy change (Herzog, 2016; Islas, 2016; Long, 2022; Plucker, 2012; Plucker et al., 2017; NAGC, 2019; NAGC, 2021e). The NAGC Board of Directors' strategic framework aims to achieve the NAGC vision by focusing on "Minds, Policies, and Practices" (Islas, 2016; NAGC, 2021c). This theme is critical when exploring the advocacy strategies of Ann Fabe Isaacs. In the chapter on Isaacs in *Illuminating Lives*, Rogers claims:

It seems apparent that her advocacy for gifted child education was directly focused on the children themselves, rather than directed at establishing a national recognition and agenda for appropriately differentiated education through the organization itself... This lack of a "national vision" of gifted education may have been a pivotal catalyst for the events that followed in the 1970s, both federally and personally for Ann. (2014, p. 264)

This excerpt alone demonstrates the tension present in the NAGC, from the early years, about how to advocate for gifted education and to what end. The lens of advocacy for gifted education and legislation, so critical to gifted education advocacy today, needs to be understood historically as only a few researchers—Jolly, Robins, and Robinson—have taken on this task in the 21st century. Thus, there are missing voices as well as missing connections between present and historical advocacy efforts. The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs situates the NAGC's historical advocacy efforts for policy and funding against the backdrop of their current legislative work.

The breadth and depth of advocacy research is a strength of gifted education advocacy and makes advocacy accessible for all—a charge led by the NAGC. The

democratization of advocacy for gifted education is also supported by the abundance of free and explanatory/practical resources on advocating for gifted children (Islas, 2016; Davidson Institute, 2022; NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021h). Despite these strengths, much of the focus on advocacy is solely on the present.

This is unfortunate considering that the history of gifted education has been weaponized against contemporary advocates (Blustain, 2020; Dreilinger, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Pirtle, 2019; Reindl, 2020). New York City Public Schools are a prominent example (Roda & Kafka, 2019). A group of plaintiffs from Brooklyn's Public School 9 compared their schools gifted and talented program to "a racial caste system" (Salhotra, 2021).

A 2021 article by Hollingsworth, from the Associated Press, provides a primer in the debate over gifted and talented programs in New York City schools with the following historical consideration:

WHAT ROLE HAS RACISM PLAYED IN THE HISTORY OF GIFTED PROGRAMS?

Racism has been intertwined with gifted education from the very beginning. Just three years after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned segregated education in its landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, Russia launched the Sputnik satellite. That raised fears that the country was falling behind technologically and led to an explosion in gifted and talented programs.

Donna Ford, a gifted and urban education expert at Ohio State University, said it is no accident that gifted education took off as schools integrated.

Some gifted programs emerged as magnet schools, designed to lure white children to predominantly Black neighborhoods to integrate them. In other districts, the gifted programs were set up to keep White families from leaving public schools and taking their tax dollars with them. Ford noted that the man recognized as the father of the gifted education movement was a prominent eugenicist....

A recent proposal to commemorate his research in the field's flagship publication, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, led to a massive controversy before it was scrapped. "Our organization almost came apart," recalled James L. Moore III, also a professor at Ohio State.

This quote demonstrates how members of the field of gifted education present assumptions about the history of gifted education that are not grounded in research, but rather cursory assumptions of causality. This information can then readily be used to argue for an end of gifted and talented programs. While neither Ford nor Moore argue for the dismantling of gifted programs, the information presented in such a statement can be used to end gifted programming. Further, the note about Terman in the *GCQ* is of relevance to this study and will be addressed in chapter five.

Greater emphasis on where gifted advocacy has come from, where the field of gifted education has been, and what historical actors have done to advance the cause of gifted education is critical to advancing the agenda of contemporary gifted advocates (Robins & Jolly, 2013). The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs addresses this gap to support the continued efforts of gifted education advocacy in the 21st century and increase the base of information on NAGC advocacy historically.

Chapter Summary

Research on the history of gifted education has been limited—with only a few voices telling the tale. As a result, numerous perspectives and depths remain uncharted. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs follows in the limited tradition of gifted history—with its eye to advocacy using knowledge of the past—as well as the traditions of portraiture, feminist history, and biography. The life of Isaacs is complicated. An examination of her life requires a deep knowledge of the intersections of Isaacs' identity

and the creation of a portrait to reveal the shades of her life and contributions to gifted education.

Revealing Isaacs' story is a political act in and of itself—it sheds light on a marginalized individual who has largely been lost to the historical record. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs is situated within a tradition of revealing our lost sisters in feminist history and with an eye to the future, aligning with the purpose of research into the history of gifted education. These two tasks, however, are only accomplished by looking at the complex intersectionality of her life—examining the personal and public, through unique periodization, which is paramount to feminist biography. The examination of Isaacs' life grounds the history of the NAGC, its methods of advocacy and changing priorities. As the preeminent advocacy organization and journal for the research of gifted education in the U.S. today, this context is critical for fully examining the field of gifted education today (Clarivate Analytics, 2020a; NAGC, 2020b).

Chapter Three: Methodology

The qualitative study of Ann Fabe Isaacs was conducted using Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot's qualitative method of portraiture. The method of portraiture established by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) is as follows:

Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experiences of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom. The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one negotiating the discourse and shaping the evolving image. The relationship between the two is rich with meaning and resonance becomes the arena for navigating the empirical, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions of authentic and compelling narrative. (p. xv)

The use of portraiture for a historical examination of Isaacs was appropriate for portraiture's descriptive nature, contextuality, interdisciplinarity, deference to the subject, and the explicit role of the researcher in creating the portrait. History is constructed through the lens of the lived experiences of individual historians (Benjamin, 2016). The explicit reference and inclusion of the portraitist's voice reflected the construction of narrative—especially in this historical narrative.

Portraiture's centering of the participant's voice is more challenging when the primary subject is no longer alive, but it was accomplished for this study using extensive

archival materials. Fortunately, Ann Fabe Isaacs' younger daughter Susan ensured artifacts of her life were donated to two archives—the Special Collections Archives and Rare Books at the University of Cincinnati and the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

These archival materials are in addition to Isaacs' numerous published writings that are available through the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. Resonance in this historical portrait was determined through refrains in personal and public work as well as through oral history interviews. Authenticity was tested through member checks with those who knew Ann Fabe Isaacs best—family members. Initially, the researcher planned to establish resonance and authenticity through interviews with colleagues as well as family members however, there were few living colleagues left in 2021 to participate in this study.

The theoretical framework of feminist history and the conceptual frame of feminist biography require detailed, nuanced, renderings of the lives of both remarkable and ordinary individuals—considering the ways they negotiated power in their specific historical context (Zinsser, 2012). This context is established through a close examination of the historical moment as well as the intersectionality of their existence (Crenshaw, 1991). Identity and context provide specific stories that are resonant in the experiences of the many (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997), “The scientist and the artist are both claiming that *in the particular resides the general*” (p. 14). Ultimately, the aesthetic whole is meant to:

The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating these experiences. (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 3)

The critical role of context is endemic to historical research broadly (Benjamin, 2016).

The situatedness of historical inquiry and portraiture created a remarkable pairing for providing an aesthetic view into the life of a woman who was both ahead of and decidedly part of her time.

Review of Research: Portraiture

Portraiture is a qualitative aesthetic research method that seeks the good and looks to create a resonant portrait of a subject through rich description (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Portraiture resists this tradition-laden effort to document failure. It is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections. The researcher who asks first, “what is good here?” is likely to absorb a very different reality than the one who is on a mission to discover the sources of failure. But it is also important to say that portraits are not designed to be documents of idealization or celebration. In examining the dimensionality and complexity of goodness there will, of course, be ample evidence of vulnerability and weakness. In fact, the counterpoint and contradictions of strength and vulnerability, virtue and evil (and how people, cultures, and organizations negotiate those extremes in an effort to establish the precarious balance between them) are central to the expression of goodness. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9)

Thus, the task of the portraitist is a challenge—to examine through a lens of goodness while also recognizing and considering the counterbalance of vulnerability and weakness (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Built on the foundations of Eisner’s aesthetic educational criticism and connoisseurship, portraiture recognizes and welcomes the portraitist’s voice as part of the research and analysis process (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

This emphasis on description and the researcher's expert voice has made portraiture a method chosen across the humanities and within the field of education—especially for its empathetic and authentic treatment of subjects and research outcomes.

In the process of creating portraits, we enter people's lives, build relationships, engage in discourse, make an imprint...and leave. We engage in acts (implicit and explicit) of social transformation. We create opportunities for dialogue, we pursue the silences, and in the process, we face ethical dilemmas and a great moral responsibility. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 11)

This is especially important considering the non-anonymized nature of this study and the familial nature. During this study, family and friends will be asked to remember the subject, Ann Fabe Isaacs, who has passed away. Portraiture's honesty in the process of conducting research, making an impact, and then walking away is an important lens through which to consider this study. Sensitive topics are raised that involve long-held beliefs and intimate details of a life lived. Participants and the framing of the portrait must be handled with care—which is supported by the lens of goodness and the recognition of the ongoing relationship between researcher and subject, even after the portrait has been completed.

The studies that follow demonstrate how portraiture is an especially appropriate method when studying marginalized individuals, such as women or members of the Jewish community, as well as how portraiture can be used even in historical inquiry—once the subject(s) are no longer living.

Portraiture on the Lives of Women

Portraiture is an accessible method of research for examining the lived experiences of women—particularly considering that women are more likely to engage in portraiture

research in the first place (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Further, the flexible nature of portraiture allows a departure from increasingly prescribed methods of research that do not always align with the needs of subjects who are only just appearing on the research agendas of the academy. The renewed interest in the silenced and oppressed of the world, and the ability of portraiture to create a richly descriptive and nuanced story has resulted in its increasingly popularity in the last decade. So much that an entire issue of the Journal of *Qualitative Inquiry* was devoted to the method of portraiture in 2005 (Portraiture Issue, 2005).

Women of Color Podcasting

Shamburg's recent study, *Rising Waves in Informal Education: Women of Color with Educationally Oriented Podcasts* (2021), explored the role of podcasting as a venue of informal education and why women of color are few in the field of podcasting. Two portraits were created to examine the broader themes pulled from all ten participants (Shamburg, 2021). Particular attention to the impetus for these women beginning to podcast and what sustained their work was considered by Shamburg (2021). Findings illustrated the continuous goals of learning for these podcasters beyond the field of podcasting alone (Shamburg, 2021).

Shamburg collected a range of data from the participants including interview with the women, their podcasts, the websites of the podcasts, and notes from their shows (2021). A key feature of portraiture is identifying resonant themes, particularly using the language of the participants themselves, rather than typical qualitative research's use of themes developed and utilized by academics alone (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Shamburg (2021) included participant resonant themes such as, “some kind of brown” (p. 706) and “podcastiness” (p. 711) to emphasize participant voice and the construction of knowledge. Additional themes included personal growth, networking, and the diverse intragroup experiences of women of color (Shamburg, 2021). This study builds on the use of portraiture for the particularly fluid and flexible experiences of marginalized individuals—who are not further marginalized through portraiture, which honors their voices as co-creators of knowledge.

Female Superintendents

Portraiture typically looks for the good and resists pathologizing (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). This study, however, begins with a challenge of finding and retaining high-quality superintendents in rural South Texas—particularly women (Allred et al., 2017). A feminist lens was used with portraiture to ensure that women’s voices were the primary method for examining their perspectives and testing for authenticity (Allred et al., 2017). The findings included an aspirational tone from participants as well as challenges unique to their experiences as female educational leaders working in rural contexts (Allred et al., 2017).

The researchers used semi-structured interview that lasted between one and two hours, as well as member checks after the interviews for triangulation of findings (Allred et al., 2017). Interviews were transcribed before analysis began (Allred et al., 2017). An additional frame of case study was used for this research—exploring the contextual factors of superintendency, particularly for women (Allred et al., 2017). The use of case study prevents generalization but allows guidance for future researchers. Ultimately, this

study demonstrates the applicability of portraiture for deeply contextualized and specific experiences.

Two Rural Teachers

Burton and Johnson's study of two teachers in the Rural South used narrative portraiture to examine why these educators chose to work in rural communities as well as the challenges they face (2010). Interested in two newly minted educators, the participants expressed dismay that their teacher preparation programs had not adequately prepared them for the challenges of rural teaching (Burton & Johnson, 2010). Portraits were constructed beginning with the locations and communities of the two teachers (Burton & Johnson, 2010)—considered a pivotal contextual element in portraiture research (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). From there, multiple themes were identified from which to analyze the portraits including the decision to become a teacher, teacher education experiences, decision to teach in a rural community, and experiences during their first year (Burton & Johnson, 2010).

Burton and Johnson used typical methods of data collection for portraiture. Multiple site visits and observations were conducted of the teachers' classrooms (Burton & Johnson, 2010). These field notes were then used to establish an interview protocol for examining the life histories of the participants (Burton & Johnson, 2010). The researchers also gathered contextual information by reviewing publicly available information about the schools and teachers' communities, as well as interviewing other teachers at the school, administration, and parents of students (Burton & Johnson, 2010). Despite such a small scope, the richness and extensiveness of the context and data collection made for a

compelling study. The portraits provided new insights into rural teaching and early career teachers as well as implications for future research. This study is a useful model for drawing conclusions from a small sample size and enrich the largely unknown experiences of rural teachers through extensive data collection.

Jewish Women Philanthropists

The 2004 dissertation *Portraits of Jewish Women Philanthropists* provides a vital examination of the lives of Jewish women and their public contributions of charity (Kaye). The public work of Jewish women giving back is well documented in the historical literature as an ongoing phenomenon (Nadell, 2003b). The historical roots of Jewish women's philanthropy began with women's organizations outside of the home that worked toward social causes and community betterment (Kaye, 2004).

The phenomenon of Jewish women's giving and commitment to community has not been explored through portraiture (Kaye, 2004). The findings of Kaye's study indicate a very engaged form of philanthropy that extended beyond the Jewish community and Jewish philanthropic efforts (2004). Emergent themes included family traditions of giving, the relationship between giving time and money, as well as women's causes specifically, and the possibility of making change (Kaye, 2004).

Kaye interviewed 18 participants from the ages of 29-92—some of whom would be the contemporaries of Ann Fabe Isaacs—all of whom gave at least \$100,000 annually to upward of \$20 million (2004). Collected data included interviews, as well as writings both by and about the participants. The lack of information on this subject led Kaye to a qualitative study which could allow exploration rather than explanation and for the

impetus to listen to women's voices (2004). Further, Kaye's methods were influenced by feminist scholarship in so far as they focus on the person rather than the subject of the interview and for its ability to recognize the impact of power and privilege in women's lives (2004). Kaye's study reinforces the need for a feminist and qualitative lens when conducting studies of women.

Portraiture on Historical Subjects

Portraiture as it has been typically conceived relies on living subjects. This allows for participant interviews to provide extensive information that determines emergent themes, resonance, dissonance, and allows for member checking to increase validity. Although these are inherent strengths of using portraiture for living subjects, historical portraiture is still practicable. The three following studies utilize biography and historical inquiry to create portraits of the subjects.

Biography as a frame for educational history is particularly useful (Finkelstein, 1998). These efforts are bolstered by extensive primary source material outside of typical interviews—utilizing archives and oral history to member check and triangulate findings. The extensive primary source material available to describe Isaacs allowed for a similarly rich construction of a historical subject.

Headmistresses and Women Professors

Fitzgerald and May's monograph on the history of women's higher education in Australia and New Zealand provide rich insights into educational history that would not have been possible with another methodology (2016). Utilizing a lens of feminist history, the portraits of women professors and headmistresses demonstrate their personal and

private lives—like feminist biography (Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 1979)—including the ways in which they were remarkable and mundane. The typified female life cycle is used to frame the portraits as well as the tension between professional and personal aspirations (Fitzgerald & May, 2016) and the ways in which they were both extraordinary and constrained by the forces of their time—again, common in feminist history (Lerner, 1979).

Fitzgerald and May used portraiture because it allows for the messiness of life histories to be considered alongside deeply contextualized circumstances (2016). The interdisciplinary nature of portraiture also allowed for a wide range of archival sources to be considered, but also for the archives themselves to be considered critically for their role in construction of the past (Fitzgerald & May, 2016). Such a critical eye allowed for the portraitist voice to raise questions about more than just the lives being studied, but also the nature of historical inquiry itself. The ability of Fitzgerald and May (2016) to construct compelling, resonant portraits without living subjects makes clear that similar studies can be completed with complexity, depth, and fidelity.

Women Home Scientists

Fitzgerald and Collins' 2011 *Portraits of Women Home Scientists* (2011) set the stage for Fitzgerald's publication on headmistresses and woman professors (2016). The utilization of portraiture for individual biographies again allows for the messiness and seeing the good of female leaders in the field of education. Fitzgerald and Collins' study fills a gap in the histories of higher education in New Zealand—that have largely left out questions of gender and women's voices (2011). Maintaining the tradition of feminist and

women's history, *Portraits of Women Home Scientists* offer a look at the private and public experiences of women who pushed their way into the masculinist institution of the university (Fitzgerald & Collins, 2011).

Fitzgerald and Collins (2011) recognize the role that individual circumstances of oppression and privilege dictated how women entered the academy in New Zealand. The individual portraits tell a broader story of the beginnings of home science as an academic discipline (Fitzgerald & Collins, 2011). The development of home science created a new opportunity for women to enter the academy which provided a foundation for greater opportunities for women in other departments at universities (Fitzgerald & Collins, 2011). Ultimately, *Women Home Scientists* situates women as historical agents in the creation of the modern-day academy (Fitzgerald & Collins, 2011).

Thomas Watson Hunster

The historical portrait of Thomas Watson Hunster situates a Black art educator as an early leader in art curriculum that has largely been lost from the historical record (Lawton, 2017). At the turn of the century, Hunster established programs for Black K-16 learners in the nation's capital (Lawton, 2017). He followed the progressive agenda set by Dewey and made instructional strides far beyond his White counterparts (Lawton, 2017). Lawton used critical race theory to conceptually frame the portrait of Hunster and identify broader issues in the field of history. "The histories of Black American art educators are often neglected and unpublished" (Lawton, 2017, p. 101).

Lawton utilized primary and secondary sources to construct Hunster's portrait (Lawton, 2017). Hunster left behind training manuals for students, correspondence, and

artwork of his own (Lawton, 2017). These sources created a portrait of an innovative art educator that can serve as guidance for art educators of color today. Lawton situates this portrait against the contemporary backdrop of racism within the academy, published histories, and the education system broadly (2017). The emphasis on history's ability to frame and encourage educators in the present is critical to the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Themes from the Research: Women & Historical Portraiture Subjects

Each of the portraits of contemporary women utilized feminist scholarship when framing their portraits—a key feature to the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs as well. However, only one (Shamburg, 2021) looked to intersectionality to examine the multiple effects of identity on their participants experiences. Considering the deeply contextual nature of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), this is a consequential oversight for creating an authentic and representative aesthetic whole. For the study of Jewish women specifically (Kaye, 2004), race was considered uncontested.

Portraiture is an ideal method when considering women subjects. Portraiture allows for flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and analysis of the deeply contextual nature of lived experience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Further, portraiture's impulse to resist pathologizing and documenting failure makes it an empathetic research method, a critically component when researching traditionally marginalized groups (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997):

Portraiture resists this tradition-laden effort to document failure. It is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections. The researcher who asks first, "what is good here?" is likely to absorb a very different reality than the one who is on a mission to discover the sources of failure. (p. 9)

Seeking the good enables strong relationships between the portraitist and the subject, critical for descriptive qualitative research (Billups, 2019). In the case of the historical portrait of Isaacs, seeking the good allowed for the development and maintenance of rapport with Isaacs' closest living family members—her daughters.

The strengths of portraiture are evident especially when the subjects are living. However, the challenges of working with historical actors are not insurmountable. Working with the subjects' daughters as interview participants and in some ways, co-constructors of the portrait, allowed for critical grounding of the subject. Particularly in historical inquiries of great individuals, it is easy to get swept up in awe of their accomplishments. Interviewing Isaacs' daughters humanized Isaacs for the researcher. The researchers' awe of Isaacs was reinforced, but from a more authentic and holistic perspective.

Research Design

As a qualitative research design, portraiture has a set of flexible expectations for data collection, analysis, and presentation of results. The lack of adherence to a strict and formal guideline for qualitative research is both a strength and a weakness (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In the case of the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs, this flexibility allowed for the flexible and interdisciplinary nature of the research. Interviews were conducted using the methodological frame of oral history. Archival research allowed for the identification of possible interview participants as well as the construction of the portrait broadly. Interviews, as well as published and archival evidence provided resonance and dissonance for the portrait. Further, the historiography and literature review were

bolstered by an initial interview with the foremost secondary source on Ann Fabe Isaacs—Dr. Karen B. Rogers.

Central to the portrait of Isaacs is the use of oral history methods to address the research questions. According to the Oral History Association, Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of individuals, communities, and participants of past events (2021, para. 1). This type of narrative, story-telling interview method paired well with portraiture, particularly for its required listening for individual life litanies. Life litanies are critical to portraiture and frequently show themselves in oral history interviews. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997):

In portraits of individuals, we usually see the conception that shapes the aesthetic whole expressed in the person's "life litany" ... The structure serves as a scaffold for the narrative—the themes that give the piece a frame, stability, and an organization.
p. 252

The use of portraiture's search for life litanies and use of this to frame the portrait is reflected in feminist biography and history's resistance to traditional periodization of women's lives without individualization for their unique context (Lerner, 1979). This interdisciplinary method allowed the portrait to be constructed based on Isaacs' identity and experiences—rather than a pre-determined chronological format. The interview protocols typified in oral history encourage the expression of life litany and researchers' active listening for emergent themes, resonance, and dissonance. This is done without prescriptions for how the story should be told by the researcher. Portraiture's integration of a range of artifacts and sources allowed for a complex and resonant rendering in the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs. In addition to interviews, primary and

secondary sources were used to construct Isaacs' portrait. In chapter two, multiple secondary sources were described that provided much of the historical background and context for examining Isaacs' life and work—Jolly's *A History of American Gifted Education* (2018) and Roger's *Ann Fabe Isaacs: She Made Our Garden Grow* (2014). These are the foundational texts of gifted history in the U.S. that provide the broad context of Isaacs' life and her legacy with the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

Rogers' 2021 interview, before archival research was conducted, allowed for an even deeper understanding of the chapter she previously wrote on Isaacs. The interview also enabled a targeted approach to the archives. From the context provided by the secondary sources, primary archival and oral history interview sources were used to construct the aesthetic whole of Ann Fabe Isaacs' historical portrait. This context is explored for the purpose of examining Isaacs' life and responding to the research questions for this study.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine the founder of the National Association for Gifted children (NAGC), Ann Fabe Isaacs. "Research questions must be crafted that flow from the purpose statement" (Billups, 2019). The research questions that flow from this purpose statement are as follows:

1. What are the intersections of Ann Fabe Isaacs' identity and experiences that have shaped the National association for Gifted Children?
2. How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' negotiate multiple identities as an advocate for gifted children?

3. How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' intersectionality influence her work as founder and president of the National Association for Gifted Children?
4. How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education?

These questions follow the expected pattern of qualitative research questions. They are open-ended to allow for description and are not intended to prove causality or correlation (Billups, 2019). These questions support a qualitative historical design that seeks to use “The analysis of past events to understand the present or project what might be best for the future” (Billups, 2019, p. 9). Examining Isaacs' life created an increasingly complex and rich narrative for situating the NAGC and the historical picture of gifted education overall.

The first research question grounded the portrait by examining Isaacs to better understand the history of gifted education. Portraiture relies on the specific to construct resonance and universality (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Examining Isaacs' specific context and choices provides the backdrop situating her unique experiences—some of which will likely have resonance for readers.

Research question two addressed a key lens of feminist history and biography—the consideration of women's private and public lives. Resonance is a key feature of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and is also helpful for contemporary readers of research, as the history of gifted education is repeatedly situated with an eye to the present and future of gifted education (Jolly, 2018). The third research question is like the second, but not quite the same. The third research question considered the roles that

Isaacs' created or had ascribed to her, as well as the intersections of her identity that constrained or empowered her in these roles. Identity categories such as religion, gender, class, race, ability, and giftedness again provided opportunities for the specific to speak to the universal.

The portraitist is very interested in the single case because she believes that embedded in it the reader will discover resonant universal themes. The more specific, the more subtle the description, the more likely it is to evoke identification (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 15).

Although Isaacs story may appear to be truly unique, the instances of specificity provide resonance for the whole of the portrait. Examining how Isaacs' Jewishness, Whiteness, giftedness, middle-classness, and her status as an able woman influenced her work in gifted education increases knowledge of the NAGC and the history of gifted education overall.

The fourth research question is also grounded in the futurist use of gifted educational history. Examining how Isaacs employed advocacy strategies in support of gifted education provides resonance and authenticity for contemporary readers. Further, examination of Isaacs' advocacy methods and tools are endemic to the foundational work of NAGC and one of her most significant contributions to the field, the establishment of the *GCQ*. In 2021, NAGC defines their role as one of advocacy leaders (NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021c; NAGC, 2021e). In the first sentence of NAGC's mission statement, advocacy is stated as a primary purpose of the organization, "NAGC's mission is to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children through education, advocacy, community building, and research" (NAGC, 2022f). The life and advocacy of Isaacs was examined to increase knowledge of how the

contemporary goals and practices of NAGC emerged as well as how her work and experience can be seen in the organization and the journal in the contemporary era.

Data Collection

The range of qualitative methods in use is matched with equal gusto in terms of diverse data collection procedures. For the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, oral history interviews and archival research were conducted. The first trip to the American Jewish Archives allowed for a list of interview participants to be initially established. Background information was derived from multiple sources including the published writing of Isaacs, writing about Isaacs, archival research, and interviews with researchers of Isaacs.

Oral history interview participants were considered primary sources for this study, along with archival findings and Isaacs' published writing. In contrast, secondary sources include historical research and writing on Isaacs. The limited writing on the history of gifted education makes it difficult for a historiography to even be considered, let alone attempted. Talking to the living secondary source in 2021, Rogers, that has already undertaken research on Isaacs enriched this study and begins to address the changing ways in which Isaacs has been considered and written about in the past seventy years.

Oral history interviews with primary source participants were not conducted until after archival research and the secondary source interview was completed. The secondary source interview enriched the historiography of Ann Fabe Isaacs as well as archival process. Further, the portrait on Isaacs was bolstered by Susan Isaacs' additional insights and corrections to the chapter. Information on the archives from the previous

researcher, Rogers, provided a wealth of information for guiding the research process of this portrait.

The interviews were semi-structured with both primary participants and Rogers. This allowed for the portraitist's voice in framing questions but provide opportunities for individuals to tell their own story and retain measured control over the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The structure of the interviews allowed the researcher to ask questions for clarification as needed while also skipping questions that became redundant.

Centering the voices of interviewees, while framing questions through context supported both feminist historical and portraiture inquiry. Two separate interview protocols were used to frame secondary source and primary participant interviews. Interview protocols for primary source participants are considered in more detail in this chapter. Interview protocols for secondary source participants are in Appendix E. A significant limitation of historical inquiry is that many participants in historical events are no longer living. This was a limitation while studying Ann Fabe Isaacs, as she died in 2001. Fortunately, Isaacs is not so long deceased that there are not still living descendants. Initially, the researcher had also planned to rely on interviews with colleagues. Unfortunately, after a list of over thirty possible participants were identified only five were still living. Of the five contacted, only one responded, despite repeated attempts. When this possible colleague participant was contacted, they were excited to participate, but upon seeing the interview questions felt that they did not know Isaacs

well enough to contribute. The archival evidence of communication between Isaacs and this individual confirms this limited relationship.

Before beginning the participant contact process, the researcher felt that the current period was the final chance to speak with many individuals who knew and worked alongside Isaacs. Unfortunately, this period had largely passed. The oral history interviews conducted with Isaacs' daughters provide an opportunity for triangulation with the archival personal and public artifacts of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The use of oral history allows for determination of repetitive refrains and emergent themes that will only be available through written artifacts in the future. This is the contemporary truth for triangulation with colleagues. Thus, the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs could not wait any longer for the most rich and complex portrait to be constructed.

Archival Research

Archival research can be conducted with any formal or informal collection of artifacts to remember a particular event, person, or period (Moore et al., 2016). For the purposes of this study, only formal archives—those associated with libraries, universities, historical repositories, and corporations were utilized—unless artifacts are provided from oral history participants. According to *The Archive Project* (2016):

At basis, archival research involves making sense of sources—the traces, what remains of people and events of the past—in a particular kind of location called an archive, which is a repository of some kind for holding and making available collections of things, ranging from institutional and formal edifices to personal collections shared between family or friends. (Moore et al., 2016)

Formal archives and repositories for historical artifacts construct history as much as historians do (Moore et al., 2016). The residue of the victors of history is ever-present in

the hierarchy presented by archives—what has been considered worth remembering and knowing by those privileged enough to determine what gets saved and recognized.

It is no surprise then that Ann Fabe Isaacs has been remembered by two archives in her hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio. However, the fact that Isaacs' younger daughter, Susan provided the artifacts to both archives leaves the researcher wondering if Isaacs' artifacts would have been sought out for official historical memory. Isaacs' wanted to be remembered. This can be seen in the number of items within the archive that were labeled "autobiography," presumably done by Isaacs herself. However, the way in which the historical record has failed to capture Isaacs makes it unclear if she would have been remembered without the effort of her daughter.

Both the University of Cincinnati and the American Jewish Archives have collections of Isaacs' public and private work, donated by to each site based on the content. Isaacs' religious writing, musical compositions, and a collection of the original copies of the *GCQ* from 1957-1974 were sent to the American Jewish archives (AJA). Most other information went to the University of Cincinnati. Isaacs' role of prominence in the field of gifted education, and her lifelong residence in Cincinnati, likely contributed to her papers being welcomed at repositories. Without these collections the construction of the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs would not have been possible.

Methodology for working with formal archives has developed from the researcher's own experience and training while working at the University of Florida Samuel F. Smathers' Special Collections. Training on preservation and use of archival materials provided practice in place of theory. For the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the practice was

supported by the theory of Moore, Salter, Stanley, and Tamboukou's "The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences" (2016). Moore et al.'s monograph resists simplifying the use of archives to a merely historical endeavor and instead looks to the interdisciplinary social scientist lens for work in the archives (2016). Particularly applicable to the study of Isaacs' is Moore et al.'s use of feminist archival methods. *The Archive Project* considers archives critically (Moore et al., 2016):

A widely held but misconceived assumption is that the documents that archives hold are always from and about "the past." The complications need to be recognized for many archives are organized around contemporary concerns and interests, while of course the contents of all archives are always read and understood within the present moment because of the particular concerns that lead researchers to investigate a particular collection or set of documents. (p. 3)

Thus, archives are not objective sources of data that can be considered without context or a critical eye. In the case of notable individuals, Isaacs included, archival items are often excluded or made private by the family to protect reputations and memories of both the living and the dead. The purposeful hiding of historical artifacts from public view has most often been in the case of LGBTQ activities and subjects—the archive as a closet to keep one in (Stone & Cantrell, 2015). The fear of judgement, disappointment, or disgrace impacts what is provided for public view in a formal archive, as well as in oral history.

The purposeful editing of archives is a limitation, but not a full barrier to data collection and interpretation. Archival sources have many of the same limitations of any artifact or data collected for a qualitative study—it is contextually situated. In the case of archives, the additional layer of individual decisions to leave things behind for future study, crates an added emphasis on the full context and perspective of the source. For the case of Isaacs, it does not appear that any information was purposefully suppressed or

withheld. Especially considering the haphazard nature of the numerous boxes at the University of Cincinnati, it appears that many of the artifacts were merely moved from Isaacs' working space into boxes for storage. There does not seem to have been any culling of the source information. Further, the archival data is not all overtly positive or polished—including shopping and to-do lists, as well as an entire range of different letters on both personal and business matters. Thus, the researcher was not significantly concerned by notions of a polished or limited archive.

The contextualized nature of archival research is part and parcel of historical and portraiture research. According to Fitzgerald and Collins (2011):

The portraitist and the biographer must take into account multiple voices and multiple readings of the evidence as they give shape and meaning to the portrait they ultimately create, and they must also make possible multiple readings by the viewer. (p. 14)

Despite the limitations of studying a non-living subject for a portrait, a wide range of artifacts can support a thorough biographical historical portrait account. This is evidenced in Fitzgerald and Collins' *Historical Portraits of Women Home Scientists* (2011):

Each portrait is composed of diverse and sometimes fragmentary sources, including oral testimonies and documentary, visual, and archival texts...Biographical analysis is helpful because it creates a greater awareness of the complexities that underpinned the lives of these women; it also offers a lens through which to understand their capacity for individual agency while highlighting the discourses of gender that framed women's professional lives. (p. 16)

Ultimately, if rich archival deposits exist concerning a subject, the portraitist can use these to construct an aesthetic whole—this is the example set by researchers who have used portraiture for historical subjects. In the case of Isaacs, the archival deposits are rich enough to construct an authentic portrait.

Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives.

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center for the American Jewish Archives (AJA) was the initial archive visited to conduct research on Isaacs. The collection of artifacts for Isaacs contained at the AJA had been thoroughly processed and sorted into five small boxes. Documents were retained that dealt specifically with Isaacs as a student, as Isaacs worked on her doctorate at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Despite failing to complete her doctoral degree, several professors at the university remembered her as an eager and engaged student.

Considering that the five boxes at the AJA are at a Hebrew institution, it was no surprise that the archives contained information that was trained on her connections to the Jewish community. This lens of Jewishness was the most pronounced in the later years of Isaacs' life when Jewishness became a more pronounced part of her life and she focused increasingly on art, her religious studies, and creativity. Personal correspondence was limited in the boxes from the AJA. The most helpful portion of the collection came in the form of the pristine collection of issues of the *GCQ* from the entirety of Isaacs' tenure. While all back issues of the *GCQ* are available digitally, there are limitations to the digital versions. First, there is a certain magic in the handling of a paper journal—becoming so increasingly foreign these days. Further, when journals are digitized, a good portion of the issue is lost. Listings of course offerings on topics of interest, pages of advertisements, and both the front and back cover have not been publicly digitized for the *Quarterly*.

For many researchers and scholars, these pages are moot and would be a waste of resources to scan and enter into the record. However, these moot pages provide critical insight into the life of Isaacs. Particularly in the earliest years of the NAGC, the *GCQ* was nearly an embodiment of Isaacs with the covers and ads telling a critical part of the story. Further, considering the artistic and creative nature of Isaacs, many covers with distinct annual themes and images reveal an additional dimension of Isaacs—sometimes with art she created herself.

Aside from the journals, a surprisingly critical artifact in the AJA was the box of audio files. Most of the recordings were of cantors singing religious music, but one piece was a rehearsal and performance recording of Isaacs' humorous composition—*Snorata*. Listening to the eclectic, sampled, creative classical composition of Isaacs truly added another dimension of understanding to Isaacs.

After listening to the lengthy *Snorata* multiple times, another cassette included a recording of a less upbeat composition of Isaacs that a performer was playing. At the end of this recording, Isaacs begins chatting with the performer about the piece, Isaacs' husband Ted, and one of their daughters. Before the recording ends, a discussion between Isaacs and her daughter ensues that touches on some meaningful topics. Hearing Isaacs' voice, something a historian does not necessarily expect—especially depending upon the subject—was truly powerful. The topics of conversation being meaningful added to the richness of the experience.

The clean and organized nature of materials at the AJA made the archival process smooth. Detailed notes, pictures, and reflections were collected daily. The amount of time

provided to consider these small five boxes seemed enormous—so no detail was overlooked, and some initial analysis was even considered. The limited amount of data set before the researcher provided an uncluttered, simple view to consider the complex information provided in the archive.

The AJA was also a critical site for discussion with others who knew Isaacs. Isaacs attended the School of Music after leaving the NAGC and there were some professors who had known the subject during her lifetime. Unfortunately, none of the professors felt they knew Isaacs well enough to be interviewed, but they did share that she was a truly unique person—always talking to others, making connections, and sharing ideas. She was remembered as a lifelong learner who was active in the Jewish community and the Cincinnati community at large. Speaking with acquaintances who knew Isaacs reinforced how special it was to be on the same college campus as the subject, while simultaneously studying her life.

Archives and Rare Books Library at the University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati Archives and Rare Books Library provided a vastly different research experience. The dozens of boxes of Isaacs' artifacts are kept in off-site storage and have been only very generally organized. Each large box includes a single piece of paper as the finding aid with many items listed as “miscellaneous.” A variety of files, binders, journal copies, and magazine clippings fill these boxes with little discernable rhyme or reason. The overwhelming number of sources required archival triage—limited assessment of sources and taking lots of pictures. Few sources were read

in detail or noted in any meaningful way. With eight boxes requested, all possibly full of treasure, speed was the focus of the work.

What the University of Cincinnati Archivers lacked in organization, was made up for in the extensive holdings. Each box was truly a mystery. The mystery remained beyond the initial examination because such little time was spent doing initial analysis. Artifacts were considered by date and relevance to the research questions. Correspondence and documents that seemed irrelevant or were far outside of the scope of the study were not recorded or considered. However, many artifacts that to the outside observer would be considered nebulous were recorded. Some of these mundane artifacts proved the most insightful. Although the researcher frequently pondered if Isaacs herself would have wanted these items maintained. Some of these insightful pieces included to-do lists, notes to friends about an upcoming trip, and rejection letters from academic publications. Ultimately, the unorganized treasure trove provided a much less polished view of Isaacs that has proven critical to crafting her portrait.

The nature of the collection at the University of Cincinnati provided a unique perspective. These archives were overwhelming with the amount of information which provided special insight into the work and devotion of Isaacs. The amount of personal and professional correspondence, and work that she produced, was overwhelming even to an outsider. A sense of how overwhelming this work was during her life began to emerge. The feeling of intensive and non-stop work for the organization and the journal came through clearly in this collection. It was not pretty, perfect, or polished—in the same way that studying a real person is never perfect and pristine. Experiencing the

University of Cincinnati Collection situated how to listen to the interviews with Susan and Marjorie.

The University of Cincinnati Archives' employees were similarly unfamiliar with Isaacs' work. This confirmed the researcher's suspicions that Isaacs has been forgotten by many. The researcher was pleased to informally teach the archivists about Isaacs' significant accomplishments and why she needed to be immortalized in the archival record as well as through this portrait.

Oral History

Oral history is a method of narrative inquiry that provides additional context and understanding of historical events through the lived experiences of individuals. For the study of Isaacs, oral history practices were aligned with the best practices' guidelines established by the *Oral History Association*. Researcher practice has been gained through the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida. Transcripts and interviews of the researcher are cited in *I Never Will Forget: Memories from Mississippi Freedom Summer* (Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, 2014).

Like archival research, oral history can be both formal and informal. For the case of the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the collection of oral history was a formalized process using semi-structured interviews. The use of qualitative, open-ended questions is both aligned with the practices of portraiture data collection and oral history. According to Shopes (2018):

oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the

conversation takes the form of an interview...oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue.
(p. 2)

The impetus on a naturally flowing conversation with specific topics of coverage aligns with portraiture's space for participants to construct their life litany and provide emergent themes—even without consciously realizing it (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

In both portraiture and oral history, the building of relationships and rapport with the participant are critical. According to Shopes (2018), the relationship between the interviewer and participant determines the data collected from an oral history interview. The requirement of rapport and the inherent assumptions between researcher and participant are a limitation of all interview research (Billups, 2019), including oral history. According to Billups, "All interviews are shaped by the context within which they are conducted...as well as the particular interpersonal dynamic between narrator and interviewer" (2019, p. 3).

The critical role of the relationship between researcher and participant is also endemic to portraiture. According to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997):

It is through relationships between the portraitist and the actors that access is sought and given, connections made, contacts of reciprocity and responsibility (both formal and informal) developed, trust built, intimacy negotiated, data collected, and knowledge constructed. (p. 135)

The relationships between the researcher and the participant are the key to data collection through interview. This data allows for an enriched and complicated view of the past. The use of oral history interviews to construct the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs allowed for one of the most promising and democratic constructions of history and for the aesthetic whole to emerge.

For in an interview, the voice of the narrator literally contends with that of the historian for control of the story. Recounting the experiences of everyday life and making sense of that experience, narrators turn history inside out, demanding to be understood as purposeful actors in the past, talking about their lives in ways that do not easily fit into preexisting categories of analysis. (Shopes, 2018, p. 4)

The ability of oral historians to listen for the story and allow participants to identify resonance and provide emergent themes makes it an ideal interview method for portraiture. The use of interview and artifacts to construct resonance is critical for portraiture. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) detail the following steps:

First, we listen for repetitive refrains that are spoken (or appear) frequently and persistently, forming a collective expression of commonly held views. Second, we listen for resonant metaphors, poetic and symbolic expressions that reveal the ways actors illuminate and experience their realities. Third, we listen for the themes expressed through cultural and institutional rituals that seem to be important to organizational continuity and coherence. Fourth, we use triangulation to weave together threads of data converging from a variety of sources. And finally, we construct themes and reveal patterns among perspectives that are often experienced as contrasting and dissonant by the actors (p. 193).

Utilizing both oral history interview, published formal writing, personal correspondence and artwork allowed for the process of constructing emergent themes for the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Interview Procedures & Protocol

Primary and secondary source Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings based on participant comfort level—two were conducted over Zoom and one over the phone. As is frequently the case with oral history, some participants are elderly and may have very limited comfort with newer video communication technologies such as Zoom. Interviews were conducted in the setting preferred by participants, whether that was in person, using Zoom, or over the phone. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for

analysis and coding. Transcripts were sent to participants for member checks before direct interview quotes were used. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and participants were contacted for a follow-up interview or clarifying questions via email. See Appendix C for the entire consent form and follow-up procedures.

Primary source participants for oral history interviews were recruited via email and over the phone through the American Jewish Archives. Appendix B includes the recruitment email that was used. Initial contact with possible participants was made via email, while follow-up contact included either a phone call or email to schedule the interview, based on participant preference. Interview participants were empowered and protected throughout the process of the interview, but also through the informed consent form in Appendix C.

The entire interview protocol is in Appendix D. Due to the nature of portraiture and oral history semi-structured interviews, there were additional follow-up interview questions generated during the interview conversation based on participant responses. In addition, some questions were omitted based on participants' having answered them already when addressing other questions and/or based on the context of participant responses. Such discretion demonstrated respect for participants' time and fostered rapport between the researcher and the subject.

Interview Questions & Connection to the Literature

The pre-determined primary source interview questions were organized with respect to their relationship to the research questions for this study as well as the literature. The table below provides the interview question, rationale for it, connection to the overall

research questions (RQ), and citations from the literature for justification. The initial questions are meant to establish context for the individual’s answers. For example, if they state that they have lived in Cincinnati for their entire lives, across the street from Isaacs, then that will naturally influence their answers and that context must be known for the purposes of this study. They may not be directly tied to a research question, but they are essential to this study.

The questions listed in “table 1” provided the template for the interview with Marjorie Isaacs. However, the questions became repetitive and ultimately were not as useful as predicted. An amendment to this study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board and a modified, shorter, list of interview questions was established. These questions retained the essence of the original interview questions while reducing repetition. The revised interview questions are listed in appendix F.

Table 1

Interview Protocol Questions with Rationale and Connection to Research

Question	Rationale	RQ	Citations
What is your full name and date of birth?	Context of the participant to situate responses	N/A	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
Where were you born and what is your current location?	Context of the participant to situate responses	N/A	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
What was your relationship with Ann Fabe Isaacs?	Relationship & context	1, 2	Oral History Association, 2009
Describe Isaacs’ public life and work.	Identify depth of relationship with respect to career	1, 2	Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 2005

Describe Isaacs' home life and her work that was not as publicly visible.	Identify depth of relationship with respect to home life	1, 2	Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 2005
How did Isaacs negotiate private home and public work life?	Identify the tension or support of public vs. private responsibilities	1, 2	Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 2002; Zinsser, 2012
What was the impact of Isaacs' race, ethnicity, and religion on her public and private life?	Identify the most prominent intersections of identity for public and private life	1, 3	Crenshaw, 1991; Lerner, 2002; Zinsser, 2012
What was the impact of Isaacs' gender and class on her public and private life?	Identify the role of gender and class on private life	1, 3	Crenshaw, 1991; Lerner, 2002; Zinsser, 2012
Do you believe that Isaacs was identified or had self-identified as a gifted person? Why/not?	Situate personal identification with gifted people and Isaacs particularly	2, 3	Crenshaw, 1991; Rogers, 2014
Would you agree with that assessment? Why/not?	Contextualize dissonance between Isaacs and the interview participant	2, 3	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
How did Isaacs define giftedness?	Identify how Isaacs' own beliefs were situated historically	1	Reis et al., 2014
How were Isaacs' views of giftedness impacted by her own experiences?	Identify dissonance and resonance	1-3	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
Why did Isaacs establish the NAGC?	Contextualize NAGC founding; Historical context; dissonance	1, 4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997

Why did Isaacs leave the NAGC?	Contextual background	1-4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
What did Isaacs consider the advocacy priorities in gifted education?	Determine advocacy agenda	3,4	Roberts, 2014
How did Ann Fabe Isaacs advocate for gifted education?	Determine advocacy practices	4	Roberts, 2014
Why did she advocate in the way that she did?	Determine rationale for advocacy practices	3, 4	Roberts, 2014
How did Isaacs rationalize the need for gifted education?	Identify resonance and dissonance	3, 4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997
How did Isaacs advocate for students from underrepresented populations?	Determine advocacy practices	3, 4	Roberts, 2014
What challenges did Isaacs face as an advocate?	Determine advocacy practices	3, 4	Roberts, 2014
Where did Isaacs believe gifted policy should be located and/or led? National, state, or local?	Determine advocacy practices	3, 4	Roberts, 2014
Did Isaacs have any regrets in her advocacy work?	Determine advocacy practices	3, 4	Roberts, 2014
How successful did Isaacs feel, and do you believe she was,	Identify resonance and dissonance	1, 4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997

as an advocate for gifted education?				
What were Isaacs main goals for gifted education and how/did those goals change over time?	Identify resonance and themes	1, 2, 4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
Did Isaacs accomplish all that she hoped to with NAGC? Why/not?	Examine NAGC founding; Historical context; dissonance	1, 4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
How do you think Isaacs would want to have been remembered by the gifted education community?	Seek emergent themes	1-4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
If Isaacs were still alive, how would Isaacs feel about the NAGC today?	Seek emergent themes	1-4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
Are there any other questions or topics that you believe I should be asking about/focusing on?	Seek emergent themes	1-4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
Do you have anything else that you would like to add?	Seek emergent themes	1-4	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997	
Is there anyone who you believe should be interviewed to	Increase oral history interview participants; Snowball sampling	N/A	Creswell & Poth, 2016	

be part of this
study?

Participants

Oral history interviews differ from other forms of qualitative interviews in that the data is typically not anonymized or confidential. According to the Oral History

Association (2021):

Because of the importance of context and identity in shaping the content of an oral history narrative, it is the practice in oral history for narrators to be identified by name. There may be some exceptional circumstances when anonymity is appropriate, and this should be negotiated in advance with the narrator [participant] as part of the informed consent process. (para. 9)

The lack of anonymity for participants is detailed in the informed consent form in Appendix C. The individuals invited to participate in this study were friends, family, and colleagues of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Initial desired participants were determined based on archival research. Secondary interview participants were identified through initial interview contacts using snowball sampling. Snowball or chain sampling “identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 127). This approach was used as necessary and possible based on participant context. Secondary source interview participants were determined based on those who have published historical information about Isaacs. These individuals include Karen B. Rogers, Jennifer Jolly, and Jennifer Robins. The only secondary source interviewed for this portrait was the foremost researcher on Isaacs, Karen B. Rogers. These interviews were conducted in

advance of archival research to frame the historiography of Ann Fabe Isaacs and the mid-20th century in gifted education.

Interviewing family members of Isaacs shed light on the contingencies of her identity and her life as a public and private figure. Oral history interviews were used to identify emergent themes, resonance, and dissonance and to frame pre-determined themes. The appropriate number of interviews and participants is difficult to judge in the case of portraiture, where description is ideally very rich and provides a range of voices and perspectives.

Initially, the researcher hoped to interview both family members and colleagues of Isaacs. Unfortunately, this was no longer possible based on the limited number of participants who were Isaacs close colleagues and were still living. The passage of time bested the researcher in this way. For the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, both of her daughters were interviewed as primary sources—a goal that Rogers had also worked toward—as well as a secondary source in the form of Rogers herself.

Once conducting archival research, over fifty possible participants were identified for input on Isaacs as a colleague. Unfortunately, from that list, only four could be confirmed as living. These individuals were contacted via email on multiple occasions. Only two responded. One felt that they did not know Isaacs well enough to answer the specific questions and the other said that they did not know Isaacs well at all. The inability to collect oral history interview data from Isaacs' colleagues is a limitation of this study.

Secondary Source Participants: Dr. Karen B. Rogers

Rogers is the scholar that has written the most extensively about Isaacs in the 2014 chapter, “Ann Fabe Isaacs: She made our garden grow.” Rogers provided support in the form of advance preparation for archival work as well as additional background knowledge on her chapter. Despite the almost 20-year gap between when Rogers published her chapter and the contemporary interview, much of Rogers’ views of Isaacs seemed unchanged. Notably, some of Rogers’ critiques seemed to have cemented even further in her mind. Ultimately, the interview with Rogers provided practical support for the archival process as well as insights into perspectives in the contemporary field of gifted education.

Primary Source Participant: Dr. Marjorie Isaacs

The two primary source participants were Isaacs’ daughters, Marjorie, and Susan. Marjorie is a few years older than Susan, which made many of their remembrances shared experiences. Marjorie provided her interview over the phone and speaking with the subject’s daughter provided crucial context, as well as increased empathy for the subject. Marjorie’s interview situated the archival sources of Isaacs. Tone was closely considered to interpret Marjorie’s statements for this project, as well as her feelings toward the project overall.

Oral history is a very personal form of data collection which rarely uses the cover of anonymity. Further, the nature of this study—considering the life and legacy of Marjorie’s mother—is highly personal. The concern that naturally arises when speaking of one’s mother was present in Marjorie’s answers and voice. It was very important to

Marjorie that her mother's legacy was positive, but she also feared an overly rosy picture that would not accurately reflect her experiences. Having already examined the archival documents, the researcher tried to make it clear that the concerns were valid—that the researcher knew Isaacs was truly astounding but that meant a lot of sacrifices at home. The intensely personal interviews with both of Isaacs' daughters confirmed that portraiture was the ideal method for this study. "Seeking the good" is a critical aspect of doing the personal work of studying the public life and legacy of a private person—especially one who has living direct descendants.

Primary Source Participant: Dr. Susan Isaacs

The interview with Susan contrasted with Marjorie in several ways. Susan shared fewer concerns about the preservation of her mother's legacy and greater interest in the development of a holistic rendering. Susan also seemed to have spent a lot of time reflecting on the study purpose and interview questions before the interview. This allowed for rich descriptions and a narrative style to emerge when she answered the interview questions.

Susan's interview was also unique because she is a qualitative PhD-level researcher and professor. Thus, she seemed very comfortable with the format and process. While Marjorie's answers seemed purposefully concise, Susan seemed to understand what the researcher expected and had prepared anecdotes and even some themes of her own childhood. Marjorie also made explicit connections between her mother's public work and what she experienced from her as her daughter. Place and space were critical frames

of Susan's interview answers while Marjorie's answers were primarily framed in terms of her relationship with her mother and how Isaacs made her feel.

Ultimately, Susan and Marjorie's interviews were different, but struck many of the same chords. They even shared some of the same anecdotes which provided added reliability to their statements. These interviews were collected to provide context for the extensive archival evidence. However, the interviews also added a richness to the artifacts—a life—to support the stories in the documents.

Authenticity

Validity and reliability are commonly the standard for measures and methods utilized in quantitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In contrast, portraiture utilizes a standard of authenticity when considering themes of resonance and voices of dissonance.

According to Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997):

The portraitist's standard, then, is one of *authenticity*, capturing the essence and resonance of the actors' experience and the perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context. (p. 12)

To ensure resonance and authenticity, member checks are a key part of the data collection and portraiture process.

For the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the main historical subject cannot speak to the authenticity of the portrait. Thus, the participants in the oral history interviews—Susan and Marjorie—provided member checks of interviews and transcripts to assess factual inaccuracies as well as the final portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs to check for resonance and authenticity. This process is described by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997:

When the final draft was complete, we sent it to the portrait site with a carefully worded letter that asked portrait subject to review the draft thoroughly and let us

know within two weeks whether there were any factual errors in the text. We reminded the actors that our hope was that they would find the portrait *authentic*. We explained that we meant that although we knew the portrayal would look very different if they had written it themselves, we hoped they would be able to read it and agree “yes, that is us.” (p. 173)

Based on participant feedback, adjustments were made to the portrait to ensure clarity, accuracy, and authenticity. The purpose of member checks for authenticity is to ensure resonance for the subject—and in the case of Ann Fabe Isaacs’ resonance for those who knew her.

The portraitist hopes to develop a rich portrayal that will have resonance (in different ways, from different perspectives) with three audiences: with the actors who will see themselves reflected in the story, with the readers who will see no reason to disbelieve it, and with the portraitist herself, whose deep knowledge of the setting and self-critical stance allow her to see the “truth value” in her work. (p. 247).

Being unable to check for resonance and authenticity with the actor herself is a challenge of historical portraiture, but it does not make the portraiture method obsolete. Through the unique perspectives of Isaacs’ daughters, as well as her numerous public and private writing, resonance and authenticity is established.

Determination of Themes

A priori themes were used to identify points of resonance with the research questions. Themes that related to identity and intersectionality were deduced before the analysis process, though not in isolation. Inductive determination of codes was completed following analysis of the data collected. Some of these themes were related to or built from the a priori themes. The identity category of ability was added as an additional area of identity that was relevant to Isaacs following data analysis.

A priori themes related to the philosophical and theoretical framework created an outline for establishing the portraiture narrative. Categories of identity, as well as important roles separate from typical categories of identity, were used to situate the portrait—resisting typical chronology or periodization of Isaacs’ life. Implications were drawn from both a priori frameworks and the field of gifted education in general. The push and pull of a robust lived experience made the identification of distinct themes challenging in that so many layers of experience interacted. The relationship between supposedly distinct themes is demonstrated by section titles in the portrait. These titles serve as transitions between related themes that are explored in the final chapter.

Implementation of Portraiture

When this study was originally conceived, there were numerous valid reasons that portraiture was presumed to be the ideal method for this study. This was confirmed during the process of data collection for this study. The nature of historical study does not permit anonymity. Further, considering that the primary participants were Isaacs’ daughters, it was especially critical to have a strong rapport and a methodology that encourages the researcher to seek the good.

Lawrence-Lightfoot’s method allows for the trained eye of the researcher to work from a place of empathy. Reassuring Isaacs’ daughters that this study was crafted from a starting point that was not critical established rapport and demonstrated appreciation for their mother’s life and legacy. The rapport developed between researcher and participants generated a fluid exchange of ideas between parties. This enhanced the final portrait as authenticity is measured against lived experiences. Specific and constructive feedback

from both of Isaacs' daughters enriched this study—such input would likely not have been received if a different method were utilized. Ultimately, portraiture created conditions for a meaningful, non-anonymized qualitative study of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Crafting the Portrait

In the beginning of the fourth chapter, there is a preface to the portrait that examines the researcher as instrument and recognizes her own biases that were considered before and during this project. There are some additional decisions that were made by the researcher that require additional explanation. In the portrait, the researcher refers to the subject as “Ann.” This was a deliberate choice. Chapters one through three and five only refer to the subject as Isaacs.

Ann was chosen for the portrait to create a softer, more personal tone, which matches the tone of the portrait. The level of in-depth research—and time spent thinking about the subject alone—created a very personal relationship for the researcher. This was expected as a typical part of the process in feminist biography. Further, to discuss the subject in such an array of roles and situations—founder, publisher, mother, wife—required a less constrained tone than what is typically part of a dissertation. Thus, “Ann” was a meaningful choice for the portrait as a juxtaposition to the formality of the rest of this project.

In addition to the use of Ann, the researcher also determined that it was best to use both analysis and raw data to craft the portrait. Quotes from Isaacs (from printed materials), in addition to pictures of her and her writing were carefully selected for the portrait. Over 500 individual artifacts were examined for inclusion in the portrait.

Only the most critical artifacts were included as images, quoted, or added to the appendix. Inclusion of certain artifacts in the portrait was based on the ability of singular artifacts to demonstrate a theme that persisted across many of the items considered. The artifacts selected spoke to volumes of artifacts examined and/or were particularly important to the construction of the portrait. Only one full document was quoted instead of pictured, and this document is included in Appendix G, but not as the sole provider of information within the text, as it is difficult to read. Included artifacts were chosen quite carefully as their inclusion challenges the flow of writing.

Included artifacts in the portrait were considered necessary to the overall narrative. Further, they provide opportunities for the reader to make their own determinations and analyses, rather than just relying on that of the researcher. The voice of the researcher is present throughout the portrait in selection of content and organization, though it is not explicitly labelled throughout. There are rare moments in the portrait when the voice of the researcher becomes explicit which is demarcated using “I” rather than a special font. This helps maintain flow for the reader and does not presume that researcher voice is only inserted in very specifically set instances.

Finally, to provide additional critical context to the portrait and analysis of results, the portraitist will situate their own identity within this work. As a gifted adult, who is now an educator of gifted children, I can say that the field of gifted education is important to me. I believe in the purposes of the field and especially respect and appreciate the work of the NAGC. My respect for this work drew me to study Ann Fabe Isaacs in the first place.

In addition, I study Ann Fabe Isaacs from the inevitable lens of someone living in 2022. To pretend that the present can be divorced from history (Armitage, 2020) feels dishonest. The portrait is meant to provide historical context to allow the reader to shape their own understanding of Isaacs, but the researcher's choices have inevitably affected the final rendering. The inevitable role of the researcher and the impact of looking at historical actors, and events, from a contemporary lens will also be explored in chapter five as part of situating the analysis of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Chapter Summary

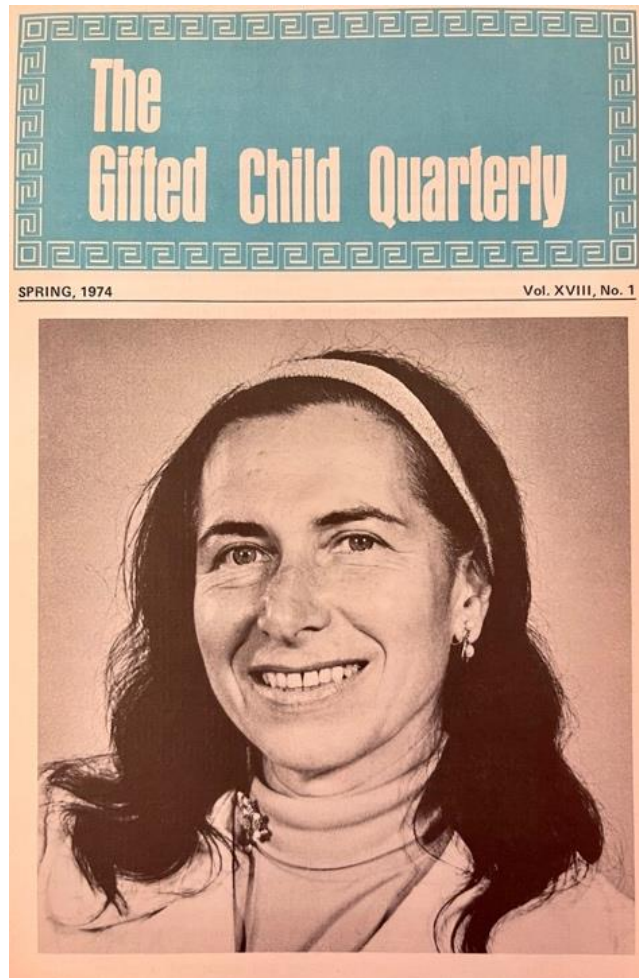
Creating a historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs was accomplished through archival research and oral history interviews. Resonance and dissonance were determined through the written public and personal correspondence of Isaacs as well as through the experiences of her daughters. Isaacs' historical portrait was guided with an eye to the future—allowing her life to shed light on contemporary issues and advocacy struggles in gifted education. Examining the intersections of Isaacs' identity and her unique historical context sets the stage for a fuller description of the history of gifted education overall and for the National Association for Gifted Children specifically.

Chapter Four: A Historical Portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs

“The work of one gifted person may influence, affect, thrill, inspire, improve, develop and/or cure hundreds of thousands of individuals for many generations, long after their own times” (Isaacs, 1968a).

The work of the gifted individual considered in this portrait lived up to the quote she wrote above. Ann Fabe Isaacs, founder of the National Association for Gifted Children and *Gifted Child Quarterly*, was a lifelong advocate for the gifted and creative, who was truly remarkable. Ann’s influence can be seen on the field of gifted education today. While her name and legacy are not well known broadly, for this researcher, she has thrilled and inspired despite her life ending over twenty years ago. This historical portrait examines the ways in which Ann’s identity challenged and propelled the work of a historical leader in the field of gifted education—as an editor, founder, executive director, writer, and advocate.

Figure 1 Cover of The Gifted Child Quarterly Volume 18, Number 1, Spring 1974(a)



Note. Ann Fabe Isaacs on the Cover as part of a series on important individuals in the field of gifted education. The other three people on the covers for the four 1974 issues were Stanley Krippner, E. Paul Torrance, and Lewis Terman.

Intersections of Ann: Identity and Influence

The examination of Ann Fabe Isaacs through the lens of identity and intersectionality provides critical information on the founder of the NAGC and the *GCQ*, which in turn provides context for understanding the contemporary NAGC and *GCQ*. Historical context for each category of identity will be provided before considering the ways in which Ann experienced that identity. In some instances, Ann's experiences matched those of the national narrative, while in other cases, they did not. This also

frames the critical feminist historical concept of situating the mundane and the remarkable.

Gender in the U.S. from 1950-1975

The term gender is relatively new in its present use as a distinction between biological sex and the performative role of gender—introduced only in 1955 by Sexologist John Money (Haig, 2004). Despite its recent introduction, gender has become a significant lens for analysis across disciplines (Haig, 2004) including history (Scott, 1986). Although the term was coined after Ann Fabe Isaacs birth, it is nonetheless a significant lens through which to situate her life and public work.

Gender is considered for the roles ascribed to women in the U.S. during the period of 1950-1975 for the purpose of this study. Ann Fabe Isaacs lived her life under the expectations ascribed to women—specifically white, middle class, very able, women. For such privileged women, the expected roles were limited—confined to the role of a homemaker and mother with a breadwinning husband (Haralovich, 1989). Such confinement and limited opportunities for women has been considered a contributing factor to the Women’s Liberation Movement in the 1960’s and 1970s (Fox, 2013).

While there are contested questions on the timing and framing of the history of feminism—typically characterized in waves (Hewitt, 2010)—the importance of *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 1963) in catalyzing women that shared roles with Ann is well-documented (Bredoch, 2006). This led to the organization of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and subsequent increasingly radical calls for changes to the status of women (Bredoch, 2006). However, the nature of women organizing around

shared beliefs and issues predates the even the 20th century (Blair, 1980; Scott, 1992). Women's associations and volunteer opportunities enriched their lives and contests the typified image of passive suburban housewives in the 1950s and 1960s (Hewitt, 2010; Woyshner & Knupfer, 2008). Thus, women's roles and experiences were not static or singular—a departure from the “Leave it to Beaver” presentation of American women in the 1950s and 1960s (Haralovich, 2009; Hewitt, 2010). Recognition of the typical roles of white, middle class, women in the U.S. from 1950-1975 situates the experiences and influence of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Ann and Gender

Ann's experiences of her identity as a woman align with the experiences of many women who devoted much time to volunteering for causes that were personally important. In addition, the expectation that she was a full-time homemaker was partially met by her placement of much of her volunteering work within the home. Ann's daughters' recollections made it clear that their mother did not seem as devoted to motherhood as their peers' mothers. However, Ann seemed to do her best to compromise and integrate both her full-time volunteer work and the role of wife and mother to the best of her ability.

Ann, The Volunteer

Ann was not unique in her status as wife and mother during the 1950s—especially as a wife who when she did work, worked primarily inside of the home. Ann's Personality Development Preschool and psychological testing was done within her home, as well as the running of the NAGC and the *GCQ*. The numerous letters received every

day for the organization demonstrated the firm roots in the home for Ann's work. While it was not unusual for women of Ann's position and race to volunteer outside of the home, her decades of commitment and public face for gifted education were special.

The American Association for Gifted Children (AAGC) was established in 1946 as the first organization dedicated to the needs of gifted children and was founded by Ruth Strang and Pauline Brooks Williamson (Robins & Jolly, 2014). Ann is remembered as the primary founder of the NAGC and as the publisher of the first journal dedicated to gifted education—an important distinction Ann wanted to separate the NAGC from the AAGC (Robins & Jolly, 2014).

Without a PhD, or significant connections to research opportunities at universities, it seems even more surprising that she took up the task of providing so much for the field of gifted education. While Ann's work within the field of education was not wholly unique, it was still unexpected for a woman in the mid-20th century to be running an educational organization and journal. Hundreds of initial letters to Ann are addressed as "Dear Sir or Sirs."

Figure 2 The letter below is from a college student requesting information on gifted children (Curtis, 1964)

November 15, 1964

Dear Sirs:

I am doing a research paper on the gifted child for my educational psychology class at Colorado State College.

I would greatly appreciate any material (pamphlets, etc) which you could send to me.

Thankyou.

Mrs. D.K. Curtis
618 - 18th Street
 Greeley, Colorado

Note. This is just one of many examples where Ann is referred to as Sirs by individuals or groups contacting her for the first time

None of the evidence collected for this study suggested that Ann was resentful of such misconceptions about her gender or title. In many initial contacts, Ann was referred to as a “sir” and that seemed to be part of running a national organization.

Ann, the Wife

Figure 3 Undated photograph of Ann and Ted Isaacs dressed for a formal event



Note. No date provided, but they appeared to be attending a formal event which Susan recalls as her father’s induction for the “Nebraska Admirals.”

The right husband provided grounding as well as encouragement for Ann’s public and creative life. Marrying a successful engineer with his own firm provided Ann with the time to be a “professional volunteer” for the NAGC and the *GCQ*. However, Ted had humble beginnings like Ann. Their shared experience of newfound wealth together made them continuously grateful for all they had. Ann’s careful consideration of finances supported the family’s needs and helped keep the NAGC and the *GCQ* afloat. Susan recalls (2022):

My mother was *extremely* frugal, describing herself as “parsimonious.” Growing up poor, she learned how to stretch a dollar. Meticulously stewarding funds explains (1) how my parents afforded Amberley Village, which was above their means when they

first moved there, and (2) how the NAGC survived from year to year. She sought discounts for everything. “We’ve got to get the word out about gifted children! She begged the printer. “I’m a full-time professional volunteer. Can’t you give us a non-profit rate?” Then she would flash her beautiful smile, and somehow the printing costs went down.

Ann’s lived experiences of childhood poverty gave her the skills to begin and maintain the critical organization and journal to which she devoted decades of her life.

S. Ted Isaacs was an ideal match for Ann. Ted was a loving and warm husband and father, and incredibly supportive of Ann’s work. In many cases, this just required him to stay out of Ann’s way. However, Susan wonders how easy it would have been for Ted to halt Ann’s work based on her personality. Constant work was part of who Ann was and she did not take criticism well. Susan (2022) recalls an annual cruise that her mother and father went on that always had:

Mother’s numerous pieces of luggage included a large suitcase stuffed with NAGC projects, as well as multi-colored felt pens and blank books she employed for her quirky drawings. She *may* only have done NAGC work on the train, and not on board ship, but I cannot verify that...She worked through my dance classes. She worked at the swim club. She worked when she drove, and she worked from bed. Why wouldn’t she work when she was on vacation with her husband? I can’t recall Dad ever attempting to discourage her because attempting to stop my mother from *anything* invited severe verbal abuse. She was like that.

The NAGC and the *GCQ* consumed Ann’s time and required sacrifices—which are clear in Susan and Marjorie’s recollections.

Both physical and mental space that was typically reserved for the family was sacrificed by Ann. Susan remembers (2022) her mother’s multi-tasking to fulfill her many roles at once:

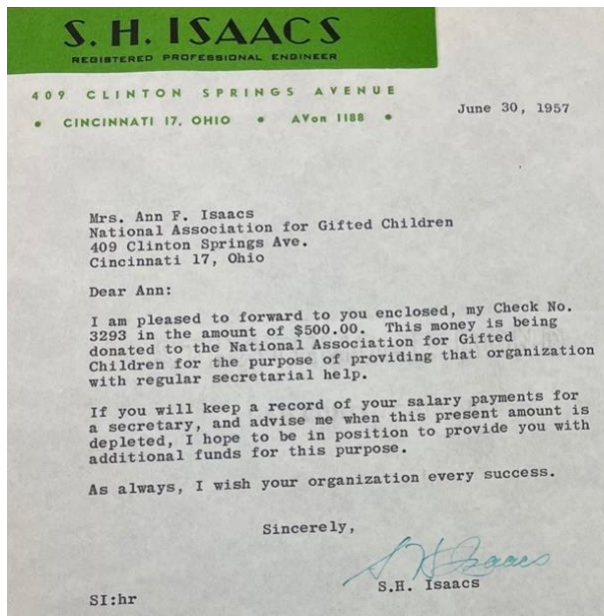
Ann rarely stopped working. Monday through Saturday the mailbox was stuffed with NAGC correspondence: queries from members, teachers, and school administrators; checks from individuals and subscription agencies; bills; catalogs depicting art

supplies and educational books, toys, and games. My mother processed the mail in her office and while she watched TV in the kitchen. She stuffed it in a 12” x 16” faux needlepoint bag and took it on errands. Seated in the driver’s seat, she extracted a handful of mail and put it on her lap. She opened and read it at stop lights. She took it to my ballet classes where parents were permitted to observe once a month.

There is no evidence viewed by this researcher to suggest anything but total support for Ann’s work by Ted—regardless of his motivation. This included emotional, social, and financial support.

At times, the many types of support from Ted coincided. The image below shows how seriously Ted took the numerous hours that Ann worked on behalf of the organization—without pay. In lieu of securing payment from the organization, Ted provided the support for secretarial help or for Ann. This gesture provided financial recognition for Ann when the financial recognition and support was unavailable from the organization.

Figure 4 Financial and emotional support from Ted (1957e)



Note. It is unclear if this salary was paid directly to Ann or to a secretary. This letter could have also served to keep record of the Isaacs' monetary contribution to the NAGC for tax purposes.

In addition to providing secretarial support, Ted paid the mortgage on the NAGC Headquarters—which were within the Isaacs' family home. While these may seem like sacrifices enough, Ted also gave up much in terms of the physical space of his home—for Ann's work with the NAGC and the journal. Multiple rooms within the Isaacs' family home were devoted to the vast amounts of paperwork that was required to run the organization and the journal. Susan recalls the overwhelming physical space that this occupied in their home:

...laundry room and the dinette, those were always association spaces. Those were her office spaces... We had a big kitchen bar, and she would sit at that kitchen bar. There was also a TV in there and she did a lot of the paperwork, not editing, but like the membership stuff. She had big file boxes, with three by five cards with all our members and several thousand members. And so, she would do that at the kitchen counter. So, then the kitchen sort of became NAGC space. And if she had a big publishing project going on, the living room table became NAGC space and there was another room off the kitchen where she had a desk. And that was NAGC space too. That was intended to be a family room and had a fireplace in it... for several years it was filled. There were boxes of papers that were stuffed in the fireplace and there was a separate cubby that was intended for logs that was stuffed with papers.

This space was paid for solely by Ted Isaacs. For the first decades of the NAGC, the Isaacs' home was the touchstone of the organization and the journal.

Ted's support was paramount in Ann's ability to start and run the NAGC and the *GCQ*. The financial security provided by Ted's job made it unnecessary for Ann to seek work outside the home which provided time for Ann to do the necessary work for the cause. Ann kept herself incredibly busy with an unpaid and exhausting job because she desperately cared for the plight of gifted children. A member of the NAGC sent Ann

referrals for potential members and in the draft of the letter Ann (Isaacs, 1972a) intended to send, she included this telling statement:

You may be thinking what I often ask myself—what would make anyone work so hard, who could quite literally be living a life of ease? The lifestyle could be rounds of bridge, golf, tennis, swimming, cocktails at some club, with a bit of casual volunteer-do-good ladies' club work. The answer is two-fold. On the one hand there are thousands in our midst who could be gifted but have not learned to live with this (successfully escaping to the ranks of the average). Instead, they suffer from numerous maladies both emotional and physiological. This loss is not only to themselves and their loved ones, it is to all of us, and the reason I keep working.

Dramatic as this statement may be, Ann truly could have lived a life of leisure and focused solely on her husband and raising her children. Her middle to upper class life would have allowed for that. However, Ann's giftedness got in the way of a life of leisure. Ann's persistent dedication to advocacy for gifted children would not have allowed her to focus solely on the roles of wife and mother.

Simply put, without Ted's financial and emotional support for Ann's work, the NAGC and the *GCQ* probably would not exist. Ann's middle-class existence allowed her to devote over sixty hours of unpaid labor weekly—which necessarily meant less devotion as a wife and mother. However, it was her choice to provide seemingly endless time and effort to the cause of gifted children and Ted supported such work. Marjorie remembers that her father was astounding and very much a feminist. She recalled:

He never pressured my mother to work or make money or to stay home and make the home—which was normative at the time. He's the one who said to her when she said I'm just going to drop out of my university classes and fail them because "I'm getting married." He said, "Oh no, you won't. You will finish this. You will finish this semester out and then you can take off and then you decide what you're gonna do." She went back a year later.

Ted not only allowed Ann's work with the NAGC and the *GCO*, but also encouraged her to make the best decisions for the long term—not to be any less than her best self. Ted primarily stayed out of any public NAGC work and stayed out of his wife's way in her work with the organization. However, this did not stop him from being incredibly proud of her. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* began its Woman of the Year Honoree program in 1968 (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2021) and by 1969, Ann had been selected. Marjorie recalls that the committee was incredibly touched by her nomination, because it was made by Ted. The committee was not expecting such a great level of husband support and encouragement. To all who witnessed their relationship, it was clear that Ann and Ted had something very special.

According to Marjorie, her father was the “man behind the woman.” Ted's support was also reiterated by another researcher of Ann, Dr. Karen Rogers who claimed, “certainly her husband supported her.” This type of spousal support was extraordinary during the middle of the 20th century when it came to expected roles for husbands (Gianopoulos & Mitchell, 1957). However, it seems less surprising given the Jewish belief in education and continuous improvement for all (Wirth, 1943). Jewish cultural norms seem to have influenced the egalitarian nature of Ann and Ted's relationship. Their religious culture created a space for Ann to succeed in the field of education despite her duties as wife and mother. The role of wife seemed to have been easily maintained despite Ann's numerous NAGC and *GCO* commitments. The same could not always be said, however, for her role as a mother of two.

Ann, the mother

Ann had two daughters, Marjorie—the eldest, and Susan—the younger. Ann was a loving mother, though this did not always come across to her daughters—as she did not behave like the mothers’ of friends and acquaintances. Ann had many responsibilities on her plate, in addition to the roles of wife and mother. She chose to take up half of a large house running her organization so that she could be a mother to Susan and Marjorie while also fulfilling her duties to gifted children of the world. Running the NAGC and the *GCQ* from her home allowed Ann to have a physical closeness to her role as wife and mother. However, the numerous hours that Ann had devoted to the organization and journal often meant a strained balance with her parenting responsibilities.

Figure 5 Picture from the Winter 1974(e) Issue of the Gifted Child Quarterly



Note. This appeared at the end of the last issue of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* that Ann edited.

At times, both Marjorie and Susan felt that their mother was not available to them. They also found it challenging to feel adequate when their mother worked with gifted children and idolized child prodigies. However, in 2022 this was a challenging feeling for both daughters to reconcile. As highly successful and every educated women, both Marjorie and Susan reflect on the challenges they faced that echoed their mother's own experiences—at a time when such public work for women was even less normative. Ann disrupted the “women can have it all” paradigm (Brown, 1982; Rottenberg, 2019) before most other middle class White women began to contend with it. According to Marjorie:

I don't really want this [the study] to be seen through the lens of what do you do with this whole situation with women having so much ability. I'm not faulting my mom because she was—you know, she was a pioneer...She wasn't being terrible. She was really trying. Looking back—the programming she set up for me and my sister the summer that she was trying to get the doctorate at Ohio State, it was really very good programming, but it was still hard to be away from Dad and away from home.

Overall, Ann did the best that she could as a mother while devoting a significant amount of energy to a worthy and noble cause.

While Ann's daughters bore the cost, in hindsight they recognize the challenges their mother faced, at a time when many middle-class women had not begun to explore the balancing act of home and work life. Ann was a remarkable woman, whose favorite child was the NAGC—which left her daughters with examples of the challenges for women who try to do it all.

One such challenging instance came when Susan moved elementary schools mid-year. Susan was bored in her tracked class because it was too easy, but her mother never spoke up. Susan questions if this is because she was not vocal enough about her

experiences, but such a problem—boredom from a lack of challenge—was a foundation of Ann’s concerns for gifted children. In 1959(b), Ann argued that gifted children, “will be bored with slowness, incompetence, windbags, and sentimentality” (p. 55). Yet, she missed such boredom in her own daughter. Further, as the youngest, Susan was particularly impacted by her mother’s NAGC and *GCQ* commitments. The lack of boundaries between the organization and the home was a strong point of reflection in Susan’s memories:

There was always only one phone number, which was the home phone number. So, all of her calls for the NAGC came over that one phone number. Moreover, she hated the telephone because she said it monopolized her time and took away from her time to work. So, who is going to answer the phone? Sometimes she did. Once I came home from school, I did. I don’t think my father ever answered that phone...I’m sure my sister did sometimes...By the time I was 10, I heard her rap so many times that if the phone rang and it was someone calling for the organization, I just answered their questions...I was so polite, so it wasn’t until the end of the conversation, I’d say, well—probably to a question I didn’t think I could handle or really my mother should handle—I said well, this is her home phone number. And then, of course, the caller was very embarrassed...I could never say I’m sure my mother would call you back, but I took their phone number, then she or I would, on her behalf, take a business sized envelope and put a brochure in it and send it off to this person. They were like, oh, you’re her kid? So that’s kind of humorous to tell, but it was very—it was an imposition. This sounds almost too strong, but it was sort of an imposition on my childhood that I didn’t like. Let me be a child in that house. It let me be an accessory to my mother’s organization. And I think she thought everyone should be an accessory to her organization.

Interviewing both Susan and Marjorie gave life to a subject who passed away over two decades ago. It also revealed the struggle of reconciling a publicly wonderful and impressive mother with someone who did not always live up to expectations of private roles in the home.

When speaking of the way in which the organization engulfed their family home, Susan said of the pile of papers in the fireplace (2022):

I just remember looking at it year after year and wondering if it ever would go away, but it did actually. Those papers eventually go away... We did eventually use that fireplace.

Though Ann was never a traditional housewife, Marjorie remembers that dinner was always on the table though Ann often brought Little C creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) to the table. Marjorie recalled:

Sometimes it was French toast and salad, but we had meals... We'd call the food "never again" which was short for never again, for better or worse. I mean sometimes it'd be just this delicious amazing whatever and you'd think "this is wonderful, better enjoy it now because you'll never get it again." Or it might be really bad, but you know you didn't have to think "oh, it'll be back." It won't be back again either.

It seems likely that Ann sought to reconcile and unify her roles as a mother and a leader of an educational movement. The two roles blended throughout her life and made her a unique leader and parent—for better and for worse. Ann's psychological training played into her public and private work.

Annually, she gave both her daughters the Stanford-Binet IQ test. This created a sense of expectation and some disappointment for Marjorie, as a child, where she wondered if she was good enough. In hindsight however, Marjorie recognizes that Ann saw most individuals—her daughters included—with the glass half full. She was perpetually looking for strengths rather than weaknesses. Ann's confidence in her daughters was reflected in the way she had them support the NAGC. In addition to having her answer association phone calls, Ann entrusted Susan with clerical work as a chore to fund Susan's vet expenses for her beloved cats.

While this demonstrates the faith that Ann had in her daughters, it also created an uncomfortable situation for Susan (2022):

Mother paid several dollars an hour. That was considerably more than babysitting offered in the mid-1960s, and it was money that I needed to pay off veterinary bills. Nevertheless, I always felt that doing NAGC office work for mother was a form of extortion or indentured servitude. What parent makes their child pay the vet bills for the family animals? But I had no leverage because these were my mother's terms: You think the cat needs to be neutered or get stitches? Then you pay the bills, and you can earn the money working for me.

This arrangement was a challenging memory for both Susan and Marjorie. It demonstrates the sacrifices that even Ann's daughters made for her unending commitment for gifted children made good through the NAGC and the *GCQ*.

Ann held her daughters to high expectations, was always looking for strengths, and encouraged creativity. They were taken to summer camps—often cooccurring with workshops Ann was teaching or classes she was taking. Susan and Marjorie were also encouraged to participate in musical, visual, and performing arts. In some ways, Ann asked of her daughters what she asked of herself—which resulted in very high expectations. This was true when it came to academic training as well.

At Walnut Hills High School, Ann's performance was average and when Marjorie attended, her performance was in some cases even less than average. Not until Marjorie was in her 40s, did her and Ann commiserate over the school together. When Marjorie was in high school, Ann encouraged her to leave Walnut Hills High even though she had personally stuck it out. Another contradiction becomes clear—Ann was at times much more understanding than her daughters expected her to be.

Encouraging creativity, frequent assessments for evidence of growth and support for the whole child were tenets of Ann's beliefs about gifted children that she practiced—at many times imperfectly—with her own. Founding and running the NAGC made it

difficult for her daughters to feel that they lived up to their mother's high expectations, as they frequently compared themselves to the very capable children Ann consulted with and spent time testing. Rather than influencing the NAGC or the *GCO*, her role as a mother seemed to demonstrate the type of leader and advocate that Ann was. She worked tirelessly, which she balanced with creative outlets.

Ann believed that everyone—her family included—had a role to play in furthering the mission of the NAGC. Ann's unwillingness to separate home and work allowed her to constantly provide for both roles—with sacrifices being made for each. However, this also meant a frequent juggling act, where sometimes plates were dropped, and phone calls went unreturned.

Ann practiced what she preached, beginning in the home. She expected her collaborators to be just as committed to the plight of gifted children as she was—which for those without such persistence and drive—may have been asking too much. She also implemented the newest research on how to support gifted children with her own daughters. The authenticity with which Ann approached the fight to support gifted children is demonstrated through her home life that largely reflected her work life. In the same way that Ann committed herself fully to the gifted education movement publicly, she reinforced that commitment in the home.

Class in the U.S. from 1950-1975

The post-war period in the U.S. saw a growing middle class for families who were White, college-educated, and had a male head of the house (Hendricks, 2019). During and following the post-war period, the American Dream (Truslow, 1931) had special

resonance for first- and second-generation immigrants to the U.S. “Through education, it offers the hope of a better life for the children of the family, with the chance for upward mobility regardless of social class” (Hendricks, 2019, p. 56). Such a focus on education was reinforced throughout the Jewish community (Wirth, 1943). This was an important feature of Eastern European Jewish immigrant culture in the U.S. in the mid-20th century (Howe, 2017).

In the 1960s, Friedan’s “problem with no name” explicitly named the limited economic prospects of White women (Friedan, 1963). They were expected to be homemakers and remain fully dependent upon their husbands for financial support (Friedan, 1962). This was a remark on the post-war period, as well as the 1960s expectations for women. While there was a women’s liberation movement happening, individuals—such as Ann—were very focused on the problems at hand. For Ann, that meant the plight of the gifted child, not women seeking equal treatment and equal pay or radical changes to gendered expectations.

Ann and Class

Ann experienced the many benefits of the growing middle class in the 1950s—suburban homes, a husband able to support the family, and support for her continuing education. The Fabes (Ann’s parents) hoped Ann’s life would be better than their own and encouraged that hope through her attendance at college. Ann’s frugality—referenced by Susan—and her commitment to self-improvement ensured that her and Ted had much greater wealth in their lives than their parents did. The privilege and opportunities

afforded to Ann and Ted, based on race, ability, and the unique historical context of the mid-20th century ensured a solid place for the Isaacs in the middle class of Cincinnati.

Impetus on the American Dream for new immigrants to the U.S. squared well with the Jewish culture's positive view of education for all (Wirth, 1943)—reinforcing the opportunities for Ann to improve her class standing. However, she never forgot her childhood struggles. Susan remembers her mother's ability to save and prevent waste as a support for the family's finances. Despite living in progressively more expensive homes, Ann did not have a luxurious lifestyle, and saved money in every way that she could.

Ann, Growing Up

Ann's significant contributions to the field of gifted education are even more impressive considering the context of her life. Born to Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, Ann's childhood was loving and warm, though below middle class. Although Ann's family did not live even a middle-class life, they did not feel the sting of poverty as others in such a situation may have.

Ann's younger daughter Susan recalls one of her uncle's recollections from childhood, that "we were really poor, but we didn't know we were poor." Ann's insular childhood community raised no questions about the relative poverty as this was a shared experience. Ann's childhood challenges made her a better advocate for gifted children. She was an incredibly loving person, a trait Marjorie recalls coming from Ann's own mother. This love extended to the gifted children of the world who require advocacy and a strong voice to have their needs met.

Despite childhood hardships, Ann and her siblings were instilled with a sense of promise. The Fabes' financial situation was not so dire as to prevent their promises from being fulfilled through educational opportunities. Further, Jewish cultural norms created high educational standards (Wirth, 1943). The Fabes expected their children to make a better life for themselves through education and college attendance.

According to Susan, "College was most certainly on my mother's horizon." Learning and ongoing education was central to Ann's community—a well-documented part of Jewish culture (Wirth, 1943) which was reiterated by Susan. Ann was not a stellar student based on grades earned in school—she would have probably considered herself an underachiever, but education would be a critical part of her life.

Transcripts from Ann's time as an undergraduate and lifelong graduate student were included in the archives. Initially, it seems that Ann did not have a set path of coursework. Once she began taking courses that were more specific to her interests—psychology, education, and research, her grades improved. These experiences allowed Ann to understand motivational and underachievement struggles of gifted individuals even though she herself was so task committed and motivated for the plight of gifted children.

Ann as an Adult from 1950-1975

For Ann, continuing her education and volunteering within the field of education was welcomed based on her gender and her religion. While many women of similar situations would not have public lives outside of their roles as wife and mother (Brown, 1982; Rottenberg, 2019), Ann knew that she was properly situated for a public life within the

realm of education. Further, her class level allowed for her to keep learning and continue volunteering in excess of a full-time job, for the NAGC and the *Quarterly*.

Continuous learning was a bright spot for Ann. She never stopped learning, and Susan even recalls her mother receiving two honorary doctorates in the 1980s and 1990s. After finishing years of graduate work, Ann spent summers taking doctoral coursework, often with her daughters in tow. Once Ann was cemented as an expert in gifted education, she even led several summer workshop series on gifted education for teachers and college students.

Later in life, Ann worked toward her doctorate in music at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Education was one way that Ann climbed the class ladder to the very middle-class rungs that her family always hoped she would reach. Another way was through marriage to the right kind of Jewish husband. Ann's ideal husband was lovable, intelligent, and supportive. The perfect husband would not only love and cherish, but also support and encourage an outspoken woman. Ted's own successful engineering firm—where he spent much of his time—allowed Ann to devote herself, sans pay to the plight of gifted children. Ann was not remarkable for being a middle-class mother who volunteered outside of the home, but she was for her constant commitment to the cause that kept her going.

Race in the U.S. from 1950-1975

The Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. picks up speed and even greater national attention in the 1950s and 1960s, notably with the landmark supreme court school desegregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (Janzen, 2010). This decade also sees

anti-lynching campaigns after the murder of Emmett Till and bus boycotts following the protest of Rosa Parks (Janzen, 2010). Cincinnati has a particularly unique racial history as a border city in a border state—where slavery was legal just across the Ohio River (Taylor, 1993). While its role in the antebellum period was unique, Cincinnati shared many features with northern states following the emancipation of enslaved people (Horn, 2022).

Red lining, as well as other racist city development plans and legislation created and maintained de facto segregation in schooling and housing in Cincinnati throughout the 20th century (Horn, 2022). Through intentional integration efforts, beginning in the late 1940s, suburban enclaves such as Avondale—the center of the city’s Jewish community at the time—were integrated and have maintained an integrated status into the 20th century (Krupp et al., 2018). This effort continued into the 1960s with North and South Avondale becoming increasingly integrated (Krupp et al., 2018).

During the 1950s, the black population of the city’s Avondale neighborhood soared as whites fled in large numbers to new suburban locations. By 1960, the southern two-thirds of the neighborhood was largely black; only the northernmost census tract (65) remained largely white. Housing there was newer and generally more expensive and, attracted by this, middle- and upper-income African Americans...began to purchase homes there. At the same time a number of the white residents decided that they would welcome black neighbors while working to keep the neighborhood from flipping rapidly to largely black as much of the rest of Avondale had. To accomplish this, they created the North Avondale Neighborhood Association (NANA) in 1960, claiming as their territory the North Avondale elementary school attendance area and crafting bylaws that stated its support for racial residential integration. (Krupp et al., 2018, pp. 106-107)

Thus, in many ways, Cincinnati represented major cities of the time in the north—some that were rapidly working to integrate and others that were fighting against such efforts. Despite the *Brown v. Board* ruling in 1954, 80 percent of Cincinnati’s schools

still failed to meet the integration goals of the Civil Rights Commission in 1977 (University of Cincinnati, 2022).

Ann's Personal Knowledge of Race

Neither social class, white privilege, education, nor an entrepreneurial spirit fully explain how Hannah Fabe, the daughter of poor Eastern European immigrants, developed into the adult Ann Fabe Isaacs. (Susan, 2022)

Ann experienced race as a middle class, White, Jewish, woman. During the period considered for this study, critical considerations of ones' own Whiteness were unknown. Thus, race will be considered from an external perspective—the way in which Ann's race seemed to influence her actions—if at all. Marjorie recalled her mother's experiences as a child to situate Ann's experiences of race. As a child, Ann grew up in an almost entirely Black neighborhood, yet Marjorie recalled that throughout her life, she was uncomfortable around people of color. Susan recalled the difference in neighborhoods that was revealed by a move when she was in elementary school. In 1962, the Isaacs family moved from North Avondale to the Amberly community—about eight miles northeast. This move coincided with the period in which the North Avondale Elementary School would have been working to maintain racial integration (Krupp et al., 2008).

Susan had strong memories of moving from North Avondale to Amberly while recognizing that her parents saw Amberly as a neighborhood they had aspired to live in. The move in 1962 also resulted in a less racially diverse classroom for Susan. She recalled that her elementary school class in North Avondale had two or three Black children per class and that most of the White students were Jewish. In contrast, at her new school in Amberly, everybody was White, and she was the only Jewish student in her

class. The new cultural makeup and some of the structural challenges of entering a new school made the move difficult for Susan—something she felt that her mother did not realize because Ann was often preoccupied with the NAGC.

Ann's Public Recognition of Race

Race was an important and public issue for the nation during the contentious period of 1954-1974 when Ann was leading the NAGC. However, based on the evidence collected for this study, the topic of race only rarely came up for the NAGC or for Ann.

Marjorie has some ideas about why this may have been. According to Marjorie:

The badly mistaken thinking at the time was that people of color were cognitively inferior, and for cultural reasons they did score lower on IQ tests. Ann believed that and did not help children of color for that reason. They simply did not qualify. I do not blame her for that societal misperception under which she practiced.

The only additional evidence found to construct Ann's views of race during her time at the NAGC are her few public writings on race, a letter, and articles that she published in the *Quarterly* about race.

In the very first issue of the quarterly, when it is *The Gifted Child Newsletter*, there is an article called "How I Teach Gifted Children." There is no author named for this piece and in Ann's self-created bibliographies, she did not claim to have written this essay. This piece was published on the front page, in the first article.

In many ways, the essay is typical of Ann's writing at the time. It even has some prescriptions for teaching gifted children that align with research-based practices today such as the use of depth when studying mathematical concepts and the identification of each students' areas of strength. However, this comparison does not last. The essay also suggests the use of blackface.

We usually have several assembly programs during the year. Every child is urged to take some part, although he is never coerced. These programs turn up hidden talents; a girl who has a sweet lilting voice; one with a good sense of rhythm, who can interpret a catchy tune, do what the music says to do; a boy who has an unusual ability to declaim another dons blackface and tells an Uncle Remus story to a wide-eyed little boy. I have been privileged to see some of these talents grow and unfold. (Anonymous, 1957)

While this article was not claimed to have been written by Ann, it was the first article in the first issue of the brand-new journal.

Most years, the NAGC and the *GCQ* were silent on the matter of race. This is not unique for the period as the *Journal Review of Educational Research* only had two chapters—the way in which the journal is organized—entirely devoted to the education of Black Children (Caliver, 1944; Knight & Norman, 1941). Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the primary place for research and inquiry on Black education was *The Journal of Negro Education* and from distinguished Black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington (Moore, 2003).

As the field of gifted education became more interested in gifted children of color—whether they were considered “underprivileged,” “African,” or “culturally deprived,” Ann’s views also progressed. Notably, individuals such as Passow (1975) and Marland (1972) were leaders in considering the identification and services for “culturally deprived” gifted children. The introduction of Torrance to the NAGC and the *GCQ* provided an increasingly robust examination of race for the field. Almost a decade after “How I teach Gifted Children,” Ann published a panel discussion from teenage youth at the 12th annual meeting of the NAGC—which she recorded and edited for print in the journal afterward.

Based on the excerpts of the adolescents, it seems they largely agreed with many of Ann's own ideas, but also explicitly referenced their unique experience. Ann reported the adolescent chairman's quote below:

We started talking about values. Most of us feel responsibility for one another. There is an interaction of give and take. So we should help one another. This led us to the racial problem. We are all people whether we are black, white, red, orange, or purple. (Isaacs, 1965b, p. 67)

In 1967(a), Ann echoed similar sentiments, though without specifically naming race as a factor important to gifted identification and services. Ann's frequent argument for the need to identify and serve was to ensure the potential of gifted children was returned to the world.

A concerted effort should be made to discover talent in underprivileged groups. There are non-test ways to identify the gifted and the creative, which trained persons could apply to visiting any classroom, as a preliminary step. Further, discovery-diagnostic testing could then follow. Talent undiscovered could remain dormant (a loss to our country and the individual)...Cannot each of us, no matter our age, occupation status or achievement dedicate ourselves to search for and encourage the gifts of all, wherever we happen to be. Especially must we engage in a treasure hunt among the disadvantaged. (Isaacs, 1967c, p. 199).

By 1967, it seems that Ann was focused upon the same goal—identifying gifted children to benefit the world but was now recognizing the multitude of ways that this could be accomplished.

In 1969(d) Ann directly mentioned Black children in the journal when she shared an anecdote of a gifted Black child with an IQ of 130 in a Head Start program in a *GCQ* editorial.

One was a little black five year old from the local HEADSTART PROGRAM. His 130 I.Q. qualified him as belonging in the ranks of the gifted. Yet if he continues to receive the kind of treatment he has been exposed to up to now, it is doubtful he will still be gifted five or ten years from now. The other black teachers pick on him, the

white headteacher informs us, as does his black grandfather, who takes the attitude he knows too much for his own good. At this date we have found a good private school which will accept him on a tuition scholarship—hopefully between the efforts of this agency and the school a donor will be found. (Isaacs, 1969d, p. 147)

This quote is a typical statement from Ann—that children must be identified as gifted and provided for appropriately so that they can reach their full potential. The student being Black makes little difference to her assessment, except that she mentions the race of the adults in the child’s life. While the above quote demonstrates a greater flexibility in identification measures for gifted children, the quote from two years later returns to the importance of IQ testing. This reflects the predominant beliefs of the time which recognized high I.Q. as one of the primary indicators of giftedness (Jolly, 2018).

Ann recounts this anecdote again in a paper presented at the 1971 Annual Meeting of the NAGC and is reprinted in the journal (Isaacs, 1971a). In this piece, Ann tries to understand the current social problems through the lens of her interest in gifted children (Isaacs, 1971a). She also recognizes the role of race but maintains her consistent argument—that the gifted must be identified and served so that they can reach their full potential. This argument is made regardless of race in 1971.

This represents the choking off of talents which gifted blacks as well as whites have had to take all their little growing up days, there is the realization that those of us who have the insight dare not stop now...Schools in our country and others as well, have been acting irresponsibly toward the gifted, black, white, or red, and are now beginning to receive partial payment for their previous behavior. (Isaacs, 1971a, p. 191)

Race becomes a more predominant topic for the field of gifted education by the end of the 1960s which is addressed with greater frequency by the *Quarterly*.

Articles from the *GCQ* that present this shift include a recommended book list by Pilon (1970) that provides books “which will indicate to all children that black is indeed beautiful” including curriculum resources “for helping children develop a pride in their black heritage” (p. 76). By the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, race becomes more commonly addressed in the journal (Bruch, 1971; Gold, 1970; Isaacs, 1971a; Joesting & Joesting, 1969; Pilon, 1970). Gold’s 1970 article specifically focuses on the creation and dissolution of The Lincoln School. This Kentucky gifted residential school—formerly a segregated all-Black institution—welcomed:

Black youngsters from Louisville ghettos and white children from Appalachia, girls from families that never had a high school graduate, and boys whose highest level of aspiration was to become sixteen and drop out of school. (Gold, 1970, p. 175)

Before its tragic dissolution in 1970, a 1968 *GCQ* article shared the following image:

Figure 6 Picture from the Lincoln School in a 1968 issue of the Quarterly (Lynn, 1968)

DISADVANTAGED GIFTED PROGRESS IN A NEW RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

THE CHILDREN ATTEND CLASSES, BUT WORK IS COMPLETED AT THEIR OWN
SPEED. THERE ARE NO GRADES, CREDIT MEANS "B" MINIMUM.

Bob Lynn



CONNIE WEATHERBY, top, and Patty Miller, both of Louisville, didn't know each other before going to Lincoln. But they chose each other as roommates. All aspects of life at the school are integrated.

Note: The image of Connie and Patty challenges beliefs that the NAGC did not support integration, or worse, was founded to stem such progress.

When Ann founded the *Quarterly* in 1957, there was an article promoting blackface. This contrasts with the *Quarterly* of the mid-1960s and beyond—which recognized the unique experiences of Black gifted children and considered the best means of identification and support.

Judaism in the U.S. from 1950-1975

Following the postwar period, many Americans turned and returned to religion—including Judaism (Sarna, 2005). With the decline of antisemitism, more non-Jewish Americans became interested in Judaism as well—even having it called America's "third

faith” with Protestantism and Catholicism (Sarna, 2005). Judaism was gaining widespread acceptance in the U.S. and economic prosperity characterized the period as well (Sarna, 2005). Newer Eastern European Jewish immigrants had risen to the economic levels of earlier German Jewish immigrants (Sarna, 2005).

The popularity of Judaism and success of Jewish people in the U.S. included not just Jewish men, but also women. Jewish women were more likely to be middle class with husbands doing nonmanual occupations, and so in many ways fit into Friedan’s women suffering from “the problem that has no name” (Diner et al., 2010). However, they expanded their public presence by volunteering, becoming activists, artists, and paid skilled nonmanual laborers (Diner et al., 2010). In addition, the high rates for Jewish women earning college degrees provided unique opportunities in and of itself (Diner et al., 2010). Jewish women had a voice and prosperity that was frequently welcomed by both the Jewish and non-Jewish community at large (Diner et al., 2010).

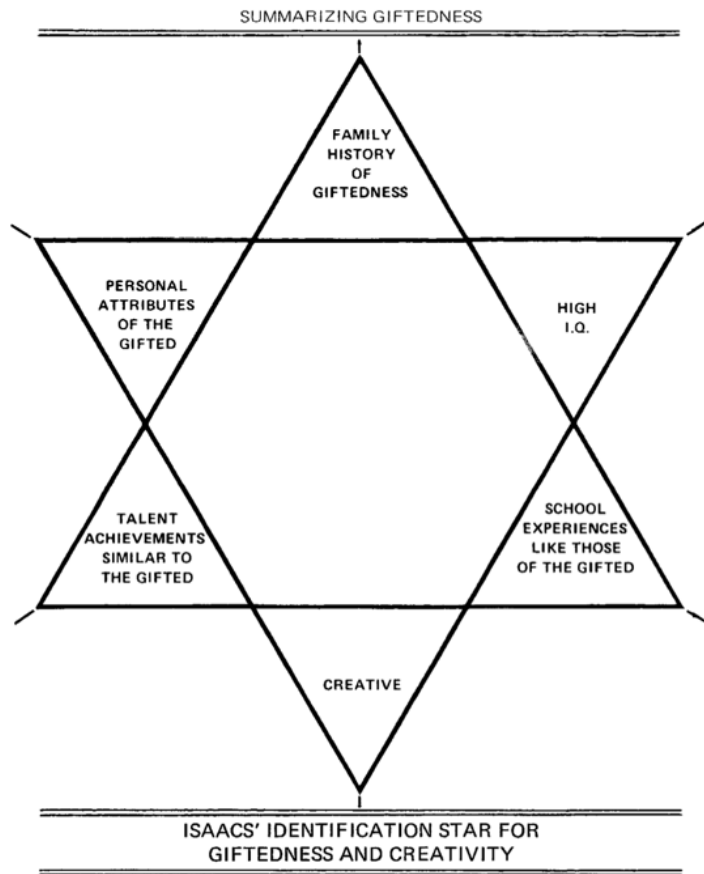
Ann’s Religion

Ann benefitted as a member of the Jewish community during such a prosperous period for Jewish Americans. The Jewish community provided a foundation of support for Ann beyond her personal and religious life alone. Many of the individuals that attended Ann’s nursery school, as well as adults and children who went to her for psychological testing, were Jewish. This community socially and financially helped support Ann’s work. Throughout Ann’s life, Jewishness and giftedness were significant separately and individually, publicly, and privately.

The connection between Jewishness and giftedness was an area of interest for Ann throughout her life. In 1963 and 1964, Ann published two articles in the *GCQ* by Manfred Adler that focused on giftedness and Jewishness. Adler's studies (1963; 1964) are rooted in the work the giants who came before him—Terman and Hollingsworth and their identification of Jewish individuals as the greatest proportion within the identified gifted individuals for their studies. Adler's research considered how Jewish culture influenced the greater presence of giftedness in these groups (1966; 1964). Adler identified gifted individuals and then drew conclusions about the Jewish culture and how it "creates" gifted individuals in ways that other cultures do not (1963; 1964).

In addition to supporting research that focused on Jewishness and Giftedness, Ann also infused Judaism with her own ideas about gifted education. The best demonstration of Ann's belief in the relationship between Jewishness and Giftedness can be seen in her identification model for giftedness, pictured below.

Figure 7 Isaacs' Identification Star published in the Gifted Child Quarterly 1972(b)



Note. Ann’s Identification Model created without a research base but resembling the Star of David, an important symbol for the Jewish Community (Greene & Peacock, 2011)

Ann’s personal correspondence—over decades—demonstrates a long-standing interest in the relationship between giftedness and Judaism. Sometimes this interest went beyond published writings in the journal and came into Ann’s advocacy work. One year the Cincinnati chapter of the NAGC gave books to Jewish children who were worthy and needy (Isaacs, n.d.-c). In this case, Ann’s interests dovetailed.

After leaving the NAGC, Ann’s belief in the connection between giftedness and Jewishness became more pronounced. In 1978 she wrote a letter to the *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* and shared her belief in the “high incidence of giftedness-talent-

creativity in their midst” (Isaacs, 1978). Ann also contacted the Canadian Jewish Congress to propose a presentation at their annual meeting to “discuss the incidence of giftedness and creativity in our groups. Especially I should like us to consider the wisdom of making this information more broadly known” (Isaacs, 1977).

Judaism connected creativity, giftedness, and the arts for Ann. Ann composed music for hundreds of hymns which seemed to be an area of great joy and pride for her. These works were performed both publicly and privately. Hymns were one way that Ann could express her creative written and musical talent and share it with others—the logical conclusion of a gifted individual’s work. The morals of the hymns likewise influenced her work with the *Quarterly* by the end of the 1960s. As riots and crises on college campuses were becoming increasingly prominent during the turmoil of the U.S. in the 1960s., Ann’s writing shifted focus in the quarterly. She relied on her religious moral beliefs to a much greater degree.

By the 1970s, Ann’s writing reflects someone who is truly rattled by and concerned about the lack of peace in the nation and abroad. She begins to consider the future of children in the wake of large student protests and tragedies such as the shooting at Kent State University (Isaacs, 1970c)—which was only a few hours from her home. Throughout 1970, the *Quarterly* had a theme of peace—discussing student protests, war, and ways to encourage peace for all. She particularly emphasized the role of gifted individuals in bringing peace to the world (Isaacs, 1969b). During this period of unrest, there was a much more pedantic tone to her editorials in the *Quarterly*. This continued through the end of her time with the NAGC.

More constructively it can be suggested specific time-proven values and virtues must be taught to all boys and girls particularly the gifted. It is they who will be in important decision-making positions. These enduring values must be reinforced by every means possible. (Isaacs, 1973b)

This tone became ever-present in Ann's writing in the late 1960s and into the 1970s.

Ann's Spirituality

Ann's public practice of religion, including composing music for hymns, attendance at Temple, and the practice of Jewish traditions was separate from the way in which she experienced a rich inner spiritual life. In particular, she seems to have possessed something special and otherworldly from within her, which motivated her critical work on behalf of gifted children. Marjorie recalls that her mother "just had it...she had so much charisma you wouldn't believe it. In the family, there was a saying, 'whatever it is that Ann has got, if you could bottle it and sell it, you'd be rich.'" A similar sentiment was echoed by a researcher who saw Ann speak in 1971. He said:

Ann, it was a real pleasure meeting you in Chicago. Your vim, vigor and enthusiasm are absolutely unmatched by anyone, anywhere. I delighted in hearing you speak. I don't believe I've met anyone as committed to anything as you are to the gifted. I would delight in having you talk to my classes here at Western if you were only available! I cite your articles often in my classes. I particularly like your article on the six varieties of gifted students. (Cangemi, 1971, para. 2)

Ann's charm and ability to connect with academics, teachers, advocates, administrators, and elected officials was an area of extraordinary ability that strengthened the NAGC and the *GCQ*. A Reform Judaism Rabbi claimed that:

Charisma is overrated. Yes, it can inspire devotion and admiration. But it depends on something stronger. It depends on chutzpah. Chutzpah is a Yiddish word best translated as "gall," or "guts." It is a willingness to break conventions. To try something different. To trust your instincts and vision. (Moffic, 2012, para. 1)

Based upon the recollections of those who knew her, it may be the case that Ann had an ample amount of chutzpah to support her charisma. This inner drive compelled her decades of work on behalf of gifted children.

Marjorie recalled a particular instance of Ann's charm when a police officer came to the house, while her preschool was in session, to give her a traffic ticket. Marjorie said, "So my mom started singing this song and playing the piano, 'see the policeman standing very straight and tall, he helps us. He's for the good of all...' making up something as she goes." The police officer left with a smile and without giving Ann a ticket. Fortunately for contemporary gifted advocates, Ann used her charm and charisma to fight for gifted children tirelessly.

Disability in the Educational System in the U.S. from 1950-1975

Prior to the 1950s, there were few educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities (United States Department of Education). Children and adults with disabilities were primarily sent to institutions which provided the bare minimum of care and no specific planning for rehabilitation or education (United States Department of Education). In the 1950s and 1960s, some states created legislation for the education of students with disabilities, but there were no federal requirements to serve these children (Martin et al., 1996). The 1971 and 1972 landmark court cases of *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education* encouraged congress to act on behalf of children with disabilities (Martin et al., 1996).

The Rehabilitation Act at Section 504 guaranteed an end to discrimination for persons with disabilities at institutions that received federal financial assistance and the

Education for All Handicapped Children Act passed in 1975 required that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education—and provided opportunities for schools to receive funding for this programming (Martin et al., 1996). The 1975 legislation was the first iteration of one of the most significant contemporary federal laws for special education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—commonly known as IDEA (Martin et al., 1960).

Special education, historically known as exceptional education, typically included gifted children and children with disabilities (Isaacs, 1966a). These two special populations developed alongside each other. According to Jolly (2018):

Special classes for gifted children gained particular momentum parallel to the implementation of special education services gradually granted to “children of subnormal intellect” in the early part of the 20th century (Van Sickle, 1910, p.357). Some educationalists recognized how the lockstep system of schooling was limited in meeting students’ needs and that providing curriculum and instruction for the “mythical average pupil” was the central source of the dissatisfaction. (Jolly, 2018, pp. 53-54)

This dovetail interest can be seen in the 1958 formation of The Association for the Gifted (TAG) which was founded as part of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) (Robinson & Jolly, 2014). The journal, *Exceptional Children*, from the CEC published 63 articles during the 1940s and 1950s pertaining to gifted education (Robins, 2010)—this is not a majority, but it demonstrates a clear connection between gifted children and the term exceptional education. The remnants of this system can be seen in several states that classify gifted as part of special or exceptional student education.

Florida provides Educational Plans—like individualized education program (IEP) plans for gifted students under their branch of exceptional student education which also

includes students with disabilities (Florida Department of Education, 2022).

Pennsylvania's gifted student plans are called Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) and are under the state Bureau of Special Education (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2014). Thus, there is an interrelation between special education, or exceptional education, and education of the gifted. This relationship becomes increasingly pronounced when considering the life and historical context of Ann Fabe Isaacs and the gifted education movement in the mid-20th century.

A more recent development in the field of gifted education has made the fields and practices of gifted education much less oppositional, and that is through the recognition of twice-exceptional children. The term twice-exceptional emerged during the 1980s (Beckley, 1998). Before the recognition of these students, there was infrequent attention paid to the child who may be gifted and have a disability. In 1981, these children were considered a “new frontier” (Whitmore, 191, p. 106). Thus, the overlap between disability and giftedness was not thoroughly considered during Ann's time with the NAGC.

Ann and Disability

Ann came of age following an era of immensely expanded IQ testing (Jolly, 2018) and in an era when there was much less sensitivity and consideration about individuals with disabilities (Korol, 2021). She emerged on the scene of gifted education when advocates and researchers were still trying to convince the world that gifted children were not sickly or deficient (Jolly, 2018). Ann did not have a disability herself—rather

significant giftedness. However, Ann did enter the field of psychology and education when there was little recognition of overlaps between disability and giftedness.

At the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth, Ann was part of the committee that recommended, “broader and more sensitive tools for identification, including means of uncovering latent talents in handicapped, culturally deprived, and emotionally disturbed children” (Isaacs, 1960e). Based upon this quote, Ann was not unaware of the possibility of gifted children who also had been identified with a disability. In addition, in 1970, in a hearing before the U.S. Office of Education, Ann said, “Only rarely is a gifted person handicapped with a disability or by being gifted” (Isaacs, 1970, p. 53). Thus, Isaacs recognized the existence of these unique children but saw them as a rarity and not necessarily a point of collaboration or compromise between gifted children education and disability rights advocates.

During Isaacs tenure, there was only a single article dedicated to concepts relating to the twice-exceptional child. This 1967 article, “Creative Experiences for the Educationally and Neurologically Handicapped Who are Gifted” demonstrates the belief in an oppositional nature between children who are gifted and children who have disabilities. (Meeker, 1967).

Although at first glance the title may seem to be a contradiction in terms, there is more evidence being found that many of the neurologically and educationally handicapped children actually have gifted IQ scores. (Meeker, 1967, p. 160)

Ann’s choices as publisher, and the recommendation from the 1960 White House Committee make it clear that Ann had some knowledge of children who were both gifted and had a disability. However, Ann’s oppositional beliefs toward children with

disabilities and gifted children reflect the context of the time—as evidenced by Meeker’s 1967 article.

Fitting with the context of the time in which Ann lived, she did not want gifted children to be categorically included in exceptional education—the term which historically included children with disabilities. An editorial from Ann in 1966(a) provides insights as to why she felt that gifted children should not be lumped in with exceptional education. The entire editorial has been included below.

Figure 8 Editorial from Ann reveals her thinking on the gifted/exceptional debate Summer 1966(a)



IS THE TERM EXCEPTIONAL ONE WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE THE GIFTED?

There is a sharp schism in the use of the term exceptional as defined by popular usage, and the manner in which the term is regarded by some professional educators and psychologists. Lay persons regard the exceptional as unusual, and in general, the inference is unusually good. Professionally the term by definition includes the physically and mentally defective as well as those of superior ability.

Initially this probably came about from the statistical definition of exceptional, with both the gifted and the retarded representing the extremes of the statistical distribution curve. In practice many university campuses charge their special education people with the responsibility of providing training for all deviants including the gifted. As a topic to be covered in a course on the exceptional child, the gifted often ends up last on the agenda, and some professors never get around to the subject at all.

Practically this sometimes has some devastating results for both the children and the teacher in charge. Numerous reports have reached the NAGC office indicating that teachers have had assigned to them both the gifted, the extremely slow and all other problems to teach in the very same classroom. Incidents such as this in itself should be sufficient for educators to re-evaluate the wisdom of grouping even the TERM gifted with the club foot, hard of hearing, speech defect, emotionally disturbed and the retarded under the one heading "exceptional."

Unfortunately we are all products of our environments, and this writer must confess that even within the past few years, the feeling about deletion of the term gifted from exceptional was so ill defined, that this editor can now sit here and only regret that she contributed a chapter on the gifted written expressly for a text on the exceptional.

Placing the gifted with the defective may have many repercussions. In the first place those pursuing the texts have the idea imparted that the gifted one is as odd as other deviants, and with this attitude will so regard such individuals when personally in contact with them.

Secondly a lack of provisions in actual practice is the result, when educators think of all exceptionalities in the same category. For while other exceptionalities are easily identified, gifted underachievers can be present in every classroom without this impinging on the consciousness of the teacher, supervisor, principal, parent, or children themselves. Where the level of performance is acceptable as compared with the average, how does a child's potential superiority become known, unless someone happens to have particular knowledge and training about the characteristics of the gifted?

Thirdly and most significant is the fact that the term exceptional blanketing the gifted along with the other defectives, will ultimately cause these children to regard

SUMMER, 1966

themselves as of lesser value to the culture than the average, even as are the other "problem" children.

Fourthly as long as we permit the term gifted to be linked with the defective, we are in essence stating that we do feel the gifted are as much problem to us in the classroom as any deviants with whom we might wish to compare them. No doubt many classroom teachers have had such feelings as these. This need not have been had their training included work on the education and psychology of the gifted. They would have had insight into how the presence of a gifted child in a classroom can enhance the school year for all the students as well as the teacher.

One might wonder why the term gifted continues as part of the exceptional grouping. Some reasons are:

- 1. This is the way it has been done in the past—it must be good.*
- 2. They are the extreme of the distribution curve.*
- 3. Texts continue to be written which include the gifted with the defective.*
- 4. College courses are taught this way.*

5. Too many persons about the country might have some of their status, position or even salary reduced if changes were made, and this at public schools, state departments of education and universities as well. However if consideration is given to the ever increasing population, it would soon be realized this would be but temporary.

One of the most heatedly emotional discussions ever witnessed by the writer took place at the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth in Washington, D. C. An M.D. made the proposal that gifted be dropped from the education definition of exceptional. Such righteous indignation was voiced (from many sides of the auditorium) that anyone would even consider there might be some wisdom to such a change! Few present had the courage to rise and be counted among those sympathizing with the M.D.'s point of view.

It's six years later now, do we have any more courage today?—A.F.I.

Note. Like so many of Ann's editorials, this reveals her least filtered public thinking on issues that were and continue to be critical to the field of gifted education

The summer 1966 editorial provides Ann's rationale as to why gifted children should not be included in "exceptional education." Reasons such as the gifted being left to the very end or given little consideration in courses on exceptional children (Isaacs, 1966) are reasonable even from a 2022 lens. Similarly, Isaacs argues that when children on both extremes of the spectrum are included together, they also end up in classrooms this way—which creates an incredible challenge for teachers who could end up trying to

meet the needs of children both two standard deviations below average IQ and two standard deviations above (1966).

Isaacs also recognizes the negative impact of labelling the gifted as odd or deviants, by placing them alongside students with disabilities (1966). However, this does not result in her questioning how such labelling impacts even those children with disabilities. This is likely because of her own purview as a gifted individual and the prevailing philosophies of children with disabilities during the time. Isaacs also claims that schools have to contend with the challenge of identifying gifted underachievers when there is an assumption that some students in the room are expected not to perform to the typical standard (Isaacs, 1966).

Ann's belief that gifted children should not be included as part of children with disabilities was reinforced by her 1970(f) editorial, "Are gifted children handicapped or exceptional? Some educators will call them any name if a dollar sign can be attached." At the top of the editorial, Ann states that this article is a portion of the testimony given at the hearings of the gifted and talented by the U.S. Office of Education in 1970 (p. 153). This demonstrates Ann's role as a leading voice for the field of education. However, she was not the only leader of gifted education during this period.

In 1972, as Congress is responding to the *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* and *Mills v. Board of Education* rulings concerning special education, Ann reprints her 1970 editorial (Isaacs, 1972c). The first federal legislation concerning the education of children with disabilities is passed in 1973 as the Rehabilitation Act followed two years later by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Despite the historical

connection between gifted education and the education of children with disabilities—under the title of exceptional education—gifted children were not included in either the 1973 or 1975 laws. Rogers is especially critical of what she considers a lack of “foresight” based on Ann’s unwillingness to have gifted children included under the label of exceptional. (Rogers, 2014, p.265). Rogers gives Ann a great deal of responsibility for the loss of gifted children in exceptional education legislation:

By the time the organization was trying to oust Ann, NAGC had lost the opportunity to contribute to national policy, perhaps due to Ann’s own vehement opposition to inclusion under the handicapped designation but also probably due to the board’s recognition that there might be a different way to “grow” at this time and they no longer needed what they viewed as short-sighted thinking. (Rogers, 2014, p. 266)

Despite Rogers’ assumption of Ann’s great influence in the debate over the legislation of exceptional children, even in 1974, Isaacs continued to argue her position concerning the matter.

In a 1974(g) editorial, Ann uses the title to introduce an important question that she poses for the field:

1974 Kentucky legislature votes to delete the term gifted from the category of exceptional; Is There Unanimous Accord that the Gifted-Creative Belong in the Category of Defective-Exceptional Handicapped?

Anyone reading the literature on the Exceptional would be led to believe the answer to the title is a hearty yes.

Thus for those trained in the field of Education and Psychology, to think otherwise is akin to heresy. Many textbooks on the Exceptional have historically included material on the gifted seem logical.

...By the time a Special Education administrator gets around to considering the gifted, he has not the time, interest, energy or money left beyond the point of granting them a passing thought. Thus as long as these boys and girls remain in the Exceptional category, provisions for them will continue to flounder and flicker out.

The decision of the Legislature came on the heels of a two year report from the committee on the Exceptional. Of more than five hundred programs in the state for various Exceptionalities, not a single school reporting, indicated there was action in the district on behalf of the gifted. (Isaacs, 1974f, pp. 117-118).

Thus, although the battle of 1973 over federal inclusion of the gifted under the label of exceptional had been won, Isaacs was ready to turn to the states. Recognizing the various levels at which educational policy is at play, Isaacs continued to advocate for what she saw as the best possible outcome for gifted children—a separate category of recognition so that the needs of gifted children would not be usurped by the needs of children with disabilities.

Giftedness in the U.S. from 1950-1975

During the Progressive Era of Education, the new field of educational psychology was highly interested in quantifying and understanding differing levels of intelligence (Jolly, 2018). “In keeping with hereditarian positions, IQ was considered fixed, providing a perpetual measure of a child’s intelligence” (Jolly, 2018, p. 36). The Stanford-Binet IQ test was an essential component of Terman’s work which has been so foundational to the field of gifted education (Jolly, 2005; Jolly, 2018; Jolly & Warne, 2020). The growth of educational psychology prodded the development of gifted education as a field because researchers could now study children with measurably high IQs (Jolly, 2018).

Once the field of gifted education was becoming increasingly established, schools began implementing practices to support such children—practices were typically only acceleration and ability grouping (Jolly, 2018). Children with below average intelligence, as measured by IQ tests, began receiving special educational programming parallel to the period when children with above average intelligence began receiving specialized

services, though those services were by no means widespread, codified, or standardized (Jolly, 2018). Terman's critical longitudinal study of gifted children beginning in 1921, *Genetic Studies of Genius*, was foundational for the field of gifted education (Jolly, 2018; Jolly & Warne, 2020). Terman used his research on gifted children to promote his eugenicist agenda (Jolly, 2018).

The legitimization of gifted education as a field was reassured through new legislative efforts that provided greater opportunities to develop American talent and intelligence with a special eye on the fields of science and technology (Jolly, 2018). However, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was the first legislation to specifically address the need to support children of advanced abilities through differentiated schooling experiences (Jolly, 2018). The new national impetus to support gifted children was reinforced by the 1960 White House Conference that focused on a problem for the decade—the problem for 1960 was identified as the need to create opportunities for children to realize their full potential (Jolly, 2018).

Advocacy organizations to support gifted children began to appear in the 1940s and 1950s, both local and national (Jolly, 2018). The most significant national organizations established were the American Association for Gifted Children in 1946 and the NAGC in 1954 (Jolly, 2018; Robinson & Jolly, 2014). “One of the main distinguishing factors between the two organizations was Isaacs' determination to establish a journal” (Jolly, 2018). Isaacs identified a tentative editorial board for the *GCQ* that included leading researchers of gifted education at the time, some of which included Terman, Witty, Barbe, and Passow (Jolly, 2018). The first time the editorial board was

listed in the *Quarterly* was 1961 and referenced only J.C. Gowan and Benjamin Fine (Isaacs, 1961). “*Gifted Child Quarterly* is now recognized as the premiere journal for published research in gifted education” (Jolly, 2018, p. 127).

In 1958 the Council for Exceptional Children, founded in 1922, established a special interest division—The Association for the Gifted and subsequently founded its own journal in 1978, *The Journal for the Education of the Gifted* (Jolly, 2018). The establishment of these organizations supported the emergence of the “Researcher/advocate” in the latter half of the 20th century (Jolly, 2018). While researcher/advocates were appearing throughout the field of gifted education, creativity was emerging as a major topic of research for the field of psychology beginning with an address to the American Psychological Association by Guilford encouraging the study of the topic (Jolly, 2018).

After experiencing creatively non-conforming students as a teacher and principal, E. Paul Torrance pursued his PhD and in 1958 began studying creativity at the University of Minnesota (Jolly, 2018). Torrance developed the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking in response to Guilford’s address encouraging the measurement of creativity—also recognizing the limits of IQ tests to identify giftedness (Jolly, 2018). “The work done in the area of creativity and its assessment resulted in the evolving definition of giftedness” (Jolly, 2018). At the 1967 annual meeting of NAGC, Witty emphasized the difference between gifted children with high IQ and high incidents of creativity while codifying the importance of both types of gifted children (Witty, 1967). In a 1960 editorial in the *GCQ*, Isaacs shared, “This *Quarterly* calls attention to several articles of interest relating to

creativity. Forthcoming issues will devote more space to this most important topic” (Isaacs, 1960g). By the 1960s, creativity had become significant to the field of gifted education (Jolly, 2018).

Ann and Giftedness

I come to believe more and more strongly that we in education have made a grave error to assume the gifted KNOW WHO THEY ARE, no matter how clearly this may appear in our minds. (Isaacs, 1970d)

A lifelong advocate for gifted children, Ann was reluctant to call herself gifted in a public forum. However, her giftedness made her an extraordinary individual responsible for creating a journal and organization that would change the field forever. Ann had many gifted characteristics as defined by herself. Her definitive list of characteristics was included as part of her identification star, displayed in figure 7. (Isaacs, 1972b). The lengthy list of characteristics matches some contemporary understandings of gifted characteristics.

Figure 9 Ann’s List of Gifted Characteristics (Isaacs, 1972b, p. 315)

often first apparent in pre-school years. They: are curious, ask many questions; have long memories for past events; sometimes learn to read alone; have a keen sense of time, keep track of the date; are persistent; like to collect things; are independent; are healthy, well coordinated; are bigger and stronger than the average; are able to sustain intense interest in one or more fields over the years; initiate their own activities (research); develop earlier, sitting up, walking, talking; learn easily; have a keen sense of humor; enjoy complicated games; are creative and imaginative; are interested and concerned about world problems; analyze themselves, are often self-critical; are self-sufficient; like older children; are original; set high goals; exhibit leadership; have many special talents; use scientific research methods; see relationships and draw sound generalizations; produce work that has freshness, vitality and uniqueness; create new ideas, substances and processes; invent and build new mechanical devices; often run counter to tradition; continually question the status quo; do the unexpected; apply learning from one situation to different situations, and solve problems in the aesthetic field.

Note: These characteristics were included as part of her Identification Star (Isaacs, 1972b, p. 315)

The characteristics that most applied to Ann from her own list, and which were knowable based on the data collected for this study included (Isaacs, 1972b, p. 315):

- Leaders (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Persistent (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Learn easily (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Set high goals (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Initiator of research (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Creative and original (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Have many special talents (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Having a long memory of past events (Isaacs, 1972b)
- Sustained interest in one or more fields for years at a time (Isaacs, 1972b)

These characteristics were demonstrated in Ann’s personal and public life—thought the two realms were rarely separate for Ann. These characteristics will be considered in depth through an exploration of Ann’s most enduring legacy—an advocate for the gifted.

Ann Fabe Isaacs Enduring Legacy: An Advocate for the Gifted

Considering Isaacs through her own identification star makes it clear that she was gifted. She utilized this giftedness to advocate for the needs of gifted children for her entire life. The following sections consider the ways in which Ann’s giftedness propelled her into the national spotlight of gifted education.

Pinpointing the moment in which Ann decided to dedicate her life to the plight of gifted children is challenging. There were her experiences of underachieving gifted children who attended her Personality Development Preschool (Rogers, 2014) and the

numerous anecdotes—which she considered case studies—that she saw throughout her lifetime. However, a high school alumni form shed light on why Ann decided to take up the fight to support gifted children.

Ann’s Long Memory

Ann’s long memory of past events was revealed through a Walnut Hills High School Alumni Form that speaks to her motivation to advocate for the needs of gifted children for her entire adult life. The copy of the original artifact is available in Appendix G. The extended excerpt below reveals Ann later in life, reflecting on her schooling years and how she went unnoticed in school. Her impassioned response demonstrates how she was overlooked as a gifted child and how other children could suffer the same fate. Though Ann was able to share her gifts productively with the world, she never forgot that other children, in the same position as she, may never reach their full potential if they were unnoticed by their teachers.

From the Walnut Hill High School Alumni Intake Form January 4, 1994

How did Walnut Hills High School most impact your life?

A wonderful question, calling for a difficult answer from this writer. Academic preparation was so good, that practically the entire freshman year at college was a total loss. Better communication should have existed between WHHS and college(s). Always liked music but lacked confidence to try out for vocal or instrumental. ALWAYS FELT DIFFERENT, SANS KNOWING IF THIS WAS DIFFERENT GOOD, OR DIFFERENT BAD. As a child was quite shy, with many home responsibilities, HS achievement was not outstanding. Would love to help teachers and counselors become more aware of how to identify and nurture CREATIVITY in all students, that they too may reap the rewards of knowing they played a role in a child’s life who became a writer of 10 books, 500 published articles, 1,000 sketches, 36 oil paintings, and 200 musical compositions. NO ONE SEEMED TO ENVISION THIS POTENTIAL. I can only say, I wish someone had. A little encouragement would have been nurturing. As educators we need to realize not all humans have the high level of self-initiating motivation and drive that reside in the writer. Many with

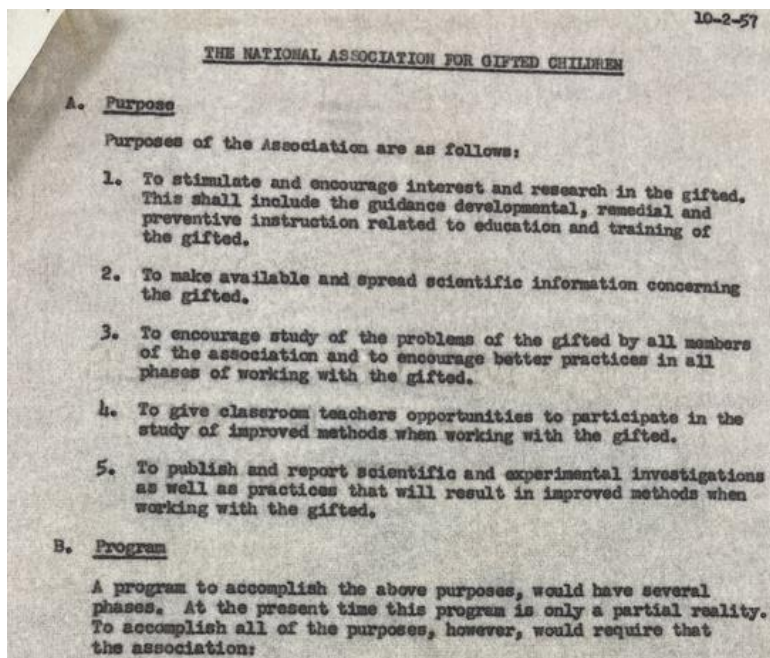
high potential are lost to society when home and school guidance are not as strong as they might be. (Isaacs, 1994) Original document in Appendix G

Ann's long memory details her personal connection to the plight of gifted children.

Ann's Initiation of Research, Persistence, and Challenging Goals

Ann's tireless efforts to establish the first journal dedicated to research on gifted education provide a clear demonstration of her persistence, initiation of research, and challenging goals she set for herself. By 1958, there was an updated constitution and bylaws of the NAGC that included a quest "to stimulate and encourage research...spread scientific information...publish and report scientific and experimental investigations" (Isaacs, 1957b). Ann wanted the journal to be accessible for all, though still a place for research-based practices. She referred to these practices as "scientific and experimental investigations" (Isaacs, 1957b).

Figure 10 Research-focused goals for the NAGC as early as 1957 (Isaacs, 1957b)



Note. Despite Ann's background as a practitioner, she envisioned the *Quarterly* and the organization as a space for research-based practice.

Although Ann herself was not an academic with research credentials, she greatly valued research and the expertise of academics. Susan and Marjorie remember their mother's long-standing desire to earn her doctorate. Susan fondly recalled,

She actually adulated anyone with the title of Doctor or Professor—adulated and when she got phone calls from a person who was a Ph.D. or professor somewhere, it meant everything to her and she wanted—I can't remember if she listened much, but she did—she was driven to tell them about giftedness and the NAGC.

Ann never earned her doctorate, but she identified with academics—especially because she spent decades intermittently working on her PhD and collaborated with researchers frequently. This connection filtered through to significantly influence the NAGC and the journal.

The board of the organization and the journal was occupied by academics though these individuals were not part of the founding membership of the organization. This demonstrates Ann's goal—to make research a foundation of the work that she did on behalf of gifted students that included all stakeholders. Although Ann herself was not an academic, she went out of her way to identify and work with leaders in the field as well as scholars that were new to gifted education. Ann's own writing and work was influenced by the scholarly nature of board members and journal contributors, as she began writing articles with more citations and a scholarly tone.

However, this tone ebbed and flowed. Especially in the 1970s, as it seemed that the journal was taking on a life of its own and becoming more separate from its editor than ever. Once the journal had gained such prominence—something Ann had always hoped for—she began losing control as more voices were weighing in. To combat this

challenge, she inserted her voice in the journal in ways she had never—even when it was only a 3-article newsletter. Instead of being able to separate herself and step back from control, Ann seemed to hang on more tightly. This was a time when Ann’s stubbornness came through. Susan recalled, “my mother was delightful. But if you disagreed with her, she could have been called an ogre.” This sentiment was reiterated by Rogers based on an unpublished manuscript with notes on the NAGC, written by Bill Vassar:

Ann was the powerhouse behind the organization, but her inability to compromise, to share power with others, or to delegate work without continuing to exert her own control over it may have led to her demise (Vassar, 1998). (Rogers, 2014, p. 265)

One leader in the field of gifted education helped with the initial steps in the journal creation process—Lewis Terman (Jolly, 2013). Terman never became a significant contributor to the NAGC or the *Quarterly*, he did correspond with Ann concerning the name of the journal and the editorial board (Jolly, 2013). Ann was the primary individual who got the journal up and running—despite the most significant challenge it presented—the cost of running such a publication.

A constant challenge that the journal presented—even during its conception—was the lack of funds for the endeavor. “I have worked as full-time executive director of this organization, sans pay. Interestingly enough the work is sufficiently gratifying, so that I serve happily” (Isaacs, 1958b). This statement was part of a request for funds for the organization from the Rockefeller Foundation. Unfortunately, Ann could not eternally work for the organization without pay—especially as the organization and journal grew in membership and prestige. Ann’s removal from the NAGC and the *Quarterly* in 1974 is more painful when one is aware of just how much she gave to the organization. Not only

was her personal home the headquarters and her husband paying her salary, but the countless hours she spent securing funding for the journal were immense.

The financial implications of the *Quarterly* were both the beginning of NAGC's greatness and would eventually signal the end of Ann's time with the organization. Beginning in 1955, Ann contacted dozens of foundations and endowments to try and secure funding for this journal. In a letter to the Wiebolt Foundation, she said of the NAGC:

One of our first objectives was the publication of a journal... There is no periodical devoted to the gifted. Our newsletter which is going to press this coming week will be the first publication of its kind in the field of education and psychology. (Isaacs, 1957a)

Some of the organizations who were contacted to provide all or part of the \$30,000 requested to begin the journal included Proctor and Gamble (White, 1956), Lilly Endowment (Pattillo, 1958), Kellogg Foundation (Seay, 1957), and General Electric (Patrick, 1955).

Beyond such household names, Ann also reached out to contacts within smaller organizations that could offer funding including the Samuel S. Fels Fund (Gruenberg, 1955) and the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation (Van Varick, 1955). She also sought to establish a department of gifted children within the National Educators Association (NEA) during the 1950s, though to no avail (Ashby, 1955). Funding would be a consistent challenge for the organization and the journal—a challenge that Ann would consistently rise to the occasion to meet.

Although Ann wanted the journal to be a place for academics to publish and learn, she also saw the NAGC and the *GCQ* as a space for all. When requesting funds for the

U.S. Steel Foundation she said, “Though this organization grows daily in membership, our finances remain strained because we strive to work with all who are interested in the gifted, be they members or not” (Isaacs, 1958c). The generosity of Ann invigorated the organization. However, time and broken promises strained Ann’s generosity especially considering the organization’s finances. Twelve years after the journal was started and 15 years after the organization was founded, Ann had this to say about the financial situation:

First please understand this organization is like the bumble bee. According to aerodynamics, she should not be able to fly. Yet she does. This organization should not be able to function on the income coming in, yet we do. Chiefly we must credit our volunteers and the management of the limited sums which come our way. Most years I have personally subsidized the organization, though I become less pleased with this arrangement, being eager to see it become self-sufficient and stand on its own feet. (Isaacs, 1969c)

Ten years after requesting \$30,000 from U.S. Steel, the *Quarterly* was up and running, with respectable readership, but Ann was still working for free. She was no longer seeing the meager financial statements from the hundreds of members in the first few years. The organization was booming.

The board of the journal was comprised of successful and respected academics—this is what Ann had always wanted. However, once all her work had come to fruition, it was deeply insulting that Ann would not be recognized for her time and effort monetarily. Ann deserved recognition of her founding work, as well as her ongoing commitment to the organization and the journal. In 1968(d), Ann wrote urgently to the Board:

WE ARE URGENTLY IN NEED OF MONEY... I can no longer work gratis and costs are rising... The board voted me a \$10,000 salary several years ago, but so far I am the only one try to raise the money—present company excepted. (Isaacs, 1968d, para. 1)

The strain on finances even began to damper her original dreams for the organization.

In the same letter, Ann abandoned her goal of making research-based information about gifted children accessible to all.

ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE. We could simply make this a very exclusive organization, and charge something like \$50.00 or \$75.00 to belong. I grow weary of those who pay the \$10.00 every third year and feel this entitles them to beef to their heart's content to top it all. We have an excellent publication that is of help to parents, teachers, and children. Of this there is no doubt. We have underestimated its worth. (Isaacs, 1968d, para.2)

It is difficult to believe Ann truly wanted to make the *quarterly* or the organization more exclusive. However, after a decade of footing the bill herself and devoting so much time and energy to the organization, she was justifiably exhausted. She had fought hard to have the board approve a salary for her, and yet she still did not have that salary. Ann did not need the salary, but she wanted the recognition and respect that a salary would confer. As late as 1968, the financial status of the journal was so precarious that authors were asked to support the cost of publication.

Figure 11 Letter from Ann to a possible author for the journal (Bonsall, 1968)

July 18, 1968

Dear Marcella:

We do indeed like your paper ever so much. But, we have financial problems more acute than usual because of rising costs.

We are therefore confronted with the choice of scheduling papers for publication not only in terms of quality (we turn about 90% down), but also in terms of the author's ability to help with typesetting costs, or calling it quits. Luckily our authors are responding.

Costs run about \$10.00 per page. The article will be about five pages. Can you please forward payment together with:

Completed references for Hallman, Ralph, "Prin of Creative Teaching"

Where? _____

Taylor, Calvin T. "Creative Process and Education". The Instructor, Nov., 1963. Vol. 1. and page _____

Same author, "Thinking and Creativity in Annals of the N.Y. Academy of Sc. Vol. 1. pages ? _____

If you let me know immediately, there is a possibility we could get the printer to run off some advance reprints for you, enough for the class you will be teaching. It sounds great. Do you know how many are expected. We will also try to get some NAGC items to you if you desire.

Sincerely,


Ann F. Isaacs, Exec. Dir.

please
P.S. Will you also forward the information you would like to appear about your personal background and current activities.

Do you like: Dr. Bonsall has served as psychologist for a number of schools systems in the state of California, and has been a guest professor at the Univ. of Mexico, Calif., and Colorado State college.

Note. Bonsall's article was published in the Winter Volume of the 1968(b) *Quarterly*

This made it more likely that only scholars of means could provide publications in the journal—likely excluding more junior scholars and/or marginalized voices. In addition, it created a space for recurring authors who knew and accepted the system. This is not to suggest that authors like Torrance were not providing quality work, but their extremely frequent publishing may have been due to their ability to support the *Quarterly's* unique needs at the time.

The archives held at least two letters like the one above. Bonsall's article was published in the December 1968 issue while another—from a professor at the University of South Alabama—was never published. There is no return letter from this professor indicating why his research was not published. It could have been due to a lack of funds to support the typesetting costs or any number of reasons. The need to ask authors to provide financial support for typesetting costs likely created a barrier for some authors and therefore, some ideas. Thus, the failure of the organization, Ann included, to raise funds to sustain the organization and the *Quarterly* created challenges for the field.

The barriers to creating and maintaining—let alone growing the journal were significant. Ann had to give up a significant amount of time, and likely even some of her own funds, to support the journal. If Ann had even an ounce less of persistence and an only average sense of duty to serve gifted children, then the NAGC and the *GCQ* would not exist. Her life as a White Jewish wife and mother challenged her work with the organization and journal while simultaneously supporting it. Without a strong foundation of giftedness and a sense of her purpose as a gifted person, the NAGC and the *GCQ* would not exist—and thrive—in the contemporary period.

By the 1960s, the *Quarterly* had become what Ann had always wanted—a well-respected, academic journal, with a respectable readership dedicated to the needs of gifted children—and she could not step back now. She was the one writing to dozens of individuals and organizations to try and get funding for this journal throughout the 1950s. She was the one who handed out NAGC brochures to everyone she met. She was the one receiving stacks of mail to her home every day about the organization. And she was the

one whose daughter was a personal secretary for the organization. It was a deeply personal insult that the board had begun trying to take control from Ann, but Marjorie reconciled this in the best way— “They took it away from her because they wanted to grow it and they were not going to be able to grow it with her at the head.” Ann was removed from the NAGC at the request of the Board. She was not happy, but it became an inevitable outcome for the organization to continue to thrive and grow.

Ann’s Leadership and Sustained Interest in the Cause of Gifted Children

Ann spent her life advocating for gifted children. She created such a solid foundation to advocate on behalf of gifted children that her legacy of work is well-maintained to date, though her name has largely been forgotten. However, she never advocated from a space of personal benefit. Ann’s NAGC stationery footer said, “For a Brighter World Tomorrow, Let Us Aid the Gifted Identify, Develop, and Wisely Use their Talents Today.” Despite Ann’s extensive writing, there is only scant evidence that she considered herself gifted.

Figure 12 Letter from Ann to a member of the press, selected to show stationery footer (Isaacs, 1970g)



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

8080 SPRINGVALLEY DRIVE • CINCINNATI, OHIO 45236 • PHONE 631-1777

Feb. 11, 1970

Mr. Chas. Reynolds
THE ATLANTIC CITY PRESS
1900 Atlantic Ave.
Atlantic City N.J. 08401

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Would you believe I took NAGC about a dozen (underexaggerated) phone calls and letters to set up the meeting this organization is holding with the School Administrators Mon. Feb. 16, Chaifonte Hadden Hotel, Noon, 2:30 and at 4:00 P.M.

From the importance of the topic they should have been seeking OUR help, and scheduled five to ten meetings on the topic, instead of the little one (out of 170).

THE MAJOR TOPIC: THE NEEDS OF THE GIFTED CHILD WITHIN THE CLASSROOM WITH IN THE CHILD, is of great importance. Studies tell us that most who could be gifted in maturity, are only average. This adds up to the fact that they are rejecting giftedness when they do know about it—re sadly never even realize they have the potential for giftedness within them.

Everyone benefits from what the gifted have to give, we all need need to figure out who the gifted are among us, and give them every encouragement possible. Our personal happiness and the future of our nation depends on its gifted leaders.

You helped us a bunch... last year... Once more we beg your assistance. NAGC meetings are open to the public, you are most cordially invited to attend. Interested parents and teachers can write the NAGC, enclosing self addressed stamped envelope for more information—free.

Thank you, thank you.

Sincerely,

Ann F. Isaacs, Exec. Dir.

IF WE WANT A WORL DOMORROW, WE HAVE GOT TO FIND OUR GIFTED_ t-day.

For a Brighter World Tomorrow, Let Us Aid the Gifted, Identify, Develop, and Wisely Use Their Talents Today

Note. In addition to the included footer, Ann sometimes typed a similar message about the importance and potential of gifted children at the end of letters—typically sans spelling errors

Strong advocacy strategies provide messaging that encourages many stakeholders to get involved—Ann’s messaging for gifted children welcomed all to support gifted children. Ann’s tactful messaging could not, however, hide her ever-present giftedness.

Ann's tireless persistence and commitment to gifted children sustained her in decades of work that at times felt fruitless and exhausting. Susan recalls that in private, her mother could become tired, though such sentiments were never expressed outwardly.

According to Susan (2022):

Within our nuclear family, of course, we knew her as a human being whose energy and spirits sometimes lagged. Sometimes she simply felt sad that other people did not share her vision about what gifted people could do for the world. Sometimes her extensive working hours just caught up with her.

Ann's commitment to gifted children seemed endless from the outsiders' view, but it required many sacrifices on her part—sacrifices often borne by her children and husband. These were sacrifices Ann was prepared to make because she believed so deeply in the righteousness of her cause for gifted children.

Ann edited the NAGC's first published monograph (Duncan, 1969) and said, "The world needs all of its gifted people. Each of us can become more alert to discovering the ways that will make it possible for them to give us their gifts." Ann's input on the Walnut Hills Alumni form makes it clear that she recognized herself as a gifted individual though she would never share that in a public forum. For Ann, advocacy and messaging was so critical that she did not make the work of supporting the gifted sound like something only for her—she considered it selflessly selfish to want the best for the gifted so that they would share their gifts with "us." However, Ann was undoubtedly someone who was sharing her gifts with the world when she established the NAGC and the *Gifted Child Quarterly*—gifts that millions continue to benefit from today.

Ann's Persistence

The persistence and leadership of Ann Fabe Isaacs were some of her most visible gifted characteristics. Founding the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952, the NAGC in 1954, and the first journal devoted to gifted education in 1957 made her a very busy leader who had to persist despite many demands upon her time. Further, Ann had a seemingly endless supply of grit and dedication. According to Marjorie (2022):

If anyone ever had grit, Ann Fabe Isaacs did. She was an energetic powerhouse. She was intelligent, articulate, persuasive, persistent, charming, spontaneous, and funny. But she could be adamant about her views.

Ann's grit and persistence propelled her work in the field of gifted education for decades. The child that Ann describes on the Walnut Hills alumni form is the child that she fought for her entire life. Ann wanted all children to be seen and understood but identified gifted children as the most overlooked and most deserving of those needing to be seen and heard. She saw the untapped potential in herself that could have been wasted were she not able to recognize it herself. According to Susan (2022):

I am certain, however, that she matured into a woman who felt she was undervalued, and that her own talents were underestimated. That is key in understanding why my mother was so troubled when gifted children and adults were ignored or underrated. Throughout most of her life, she crusaded tirelessly in the defense of gifted children and adults because internally she keenly felt undervalued herself.

Ann's commitment to ensure that gifted children never felt undervalued—as she had—became a lifelong crusade. Even after being removed from the NAGC in 1974, Ann strove to support gifted and creative individuals for the remainder of her life through the second major educational organization she founded in her final year with the NAGC, the National Association for Creative Children and Adults (NACCA). This demonstrates her

persistence, long memory, and her sustained commitment to an area of interest—for Ann this interest was the needs of the gifted child.

In addition to her commitment to the needs of the gifted child, Ann was committed to continuous self-improvement through education. Throughout her life, Ann worked toward her doctorate and held two master's degrees in addition to her bachelor's degree. Susan contextualized her mother's educational aspirations in this way (2022):

An M.A. and M.Ed. *were* sufficient in her time, although she would have dearly loved a doctorate. Nevertheless, Ann was atypical in having a B.A. plus two graduate degrees. Many of her female peers began college but did not complete it. They came of age between the first and second waves of feminism, before anyone wrote or spoke of women's liberation. In Ann's era, it was sometimes said that the M.R.S. degree was sufficient, making her three degrees all the more impressive.

Ann's persistence and sustained interests carried her beyond the expectations for women of her time. She married during her bachelor's degree program and continued learning, growing, and improving herself throughout her life.

Ann also persisted when it came to collaborating and building relationships for the organization and the *Quarterly*. Through her decades of work in the gifted education movement, she connected with some of the most prestigious individuals in the field including Virgil Ward, E. Paul Torrance, and Stanley Krippner. However, such connections were not common in her personal life. Marjorie recalls that her mother had very few friends outside of gifted education. This may have been due to her intense focus on the plight of gifted children. Ann was relatively unknown to the field of gifted education when she began her work in the 1950s. She had her own experiences from her life and what she witnessed in her own practice. Most critically though, Ann had what it takes to nurture and grow a movement.

Ann's experiences as a preschool teacher with her Personality Development Preschool and psychologist working from her home created connections with her community and allowed her to identify a need. She had the education and good instincts to recognize a problem when she saw one—that most of the students with high IQs that attended her preschool did not excel when they went into public schooling. From here a need was identified and Ann's role as an advocate for gifted education began. Ann's commitment to the needs of gifted children for over fifty years started simply—she saw a need and she wanted to help.

Persistence made Isaacs a leader worthy of recognition, but also created challenges when empathizing with others. Ann struggled to understand why others did not perform and/or think like her. Marjorie recalls her mother being “perplexed” when she was unable to learn academic content with a single repetition. Ann's frustrations may have contributed to her removal from the NAGC as such an attitude made her challenging to work with. Although Ann's extensive communication with leaders in the field, such as Torrance, made their relationship seem close, she still struggled when given directives.

Susan recalls (2022):

Although mother sometimes solicited the advice of others (such as Krippner and Torrance), she never welcomed being told what to do. In the family, we had a saying, probably coined by my father, “There's a right way, a wrong way, and an Ann Isaacs way.” For someone who deeply valued creativity, she was rigid in many regards.

This presented a contradiction of Ann, that she could be warm, understanding, accepting, and collaborative while also struggling to find common ground and/or work cordially with those who she disagreed with. Susan also presents another contradiction, that her mother could be very flexible and fluid when she was in a creative thinking state,

but at other times incredibly inflexible. However, Ann's single-mindedness and inflexibility made the creation of the NAGC possible—she would not stop until she reached her goals.

In her work with the *Quarterly* and the organization, Ann's persistence was seemingly endless. The archives contain thousands of letters Ann wrote on behalf of the organization and the journal in addition to public speaking engagements, workshops she taught, and published writing that she created on behalf of the gifted. Ann was a picture of giftedness not going to waste—the thing she feared most. She would not let her talents and her goals fall to the wayside. Marjorie recalls that her mother rarely slept more than four hours per night. This likely contributed to her high levels of productivity and ability to remain endlessly committed to the task of gifted children.

Ann's charm and charisma enabled her to be a model advocate through her networking skills. Ann was a born networker—a critical aspect of effective advocacy (Roberts, 2014). Ann situated gifted education as something that everyone would benefit from and should therefore be fighting for. Further, she felt so justified in her righteous cause that she was unafraid to contact major figures in the field of gifted education and in the world at large. According to Susan:

She was an incredible networker. And she also was extremely gregarious. And was never, ever afraid of authority. Never. And I learned that from her, it's like—is there some person of authority who you have a legitimate reason to write to or speak to or have a meeting with? If the answers to some of those are yes, then go for it...She went from talking to people standing in the supermarket line to a meeting with a council person, a mayor, a governor. I think she knew she couldn't just get an appointment with the president of the United States at the drop of a hat, but she networked...She networked till she got where she wanted to go.... Giftedness was my mother's hammer...She wasn't interested in anything else.

This righteousness of the plight of gifted education was the impetus that Ann used to utilize her natural charm and charisma in the service of others—as Susan said, giftedness was Ann’s hammer. Ann’s ability as a networker is demonstrated in both her daughters’ recollections as well as the overwhelming archival evidence. She was in touch with dozens of philanthropic organizations, at least 100 universities, thousands of researchers, teachers, and families of the gifted, as well as numerous government officials at federal, local, and state levels.

No one was above the reach of Ann when it came to the plight of gifted children. In 1969, Mrs. Richard M. Nixon was the Honorary Chairman of the 16th Annual NAGC Convention (Isaacs, 1969b). This connection, impressive in and of itself, was then used to correspond with the Director of the White House Conference on Children and Youth. Ann always leveraged her cause with all who showed even slight interest in the plight of gifted children. According to Renzulli (2011), “one of the key ingredients that has characterized the work of gifted persons is the ability to involve oneself totally in a problem or area for an extended period of time” (p. 84).

For decades, Ann worked with state, local, and federal officials on behalf of gifted children. She also devoted time to researchers, families, teachers, counselors, psychologists, school district leaders, school building leaders, and gifted children themselves. And on behalf of the financial survival of the organization and the quarterly, Ann personally contacted hundreds of individuals.

Ann’s dedication to gifted children and her ever-advocating personality was a considerable gift that helped propel the organization and the journal forward. Her

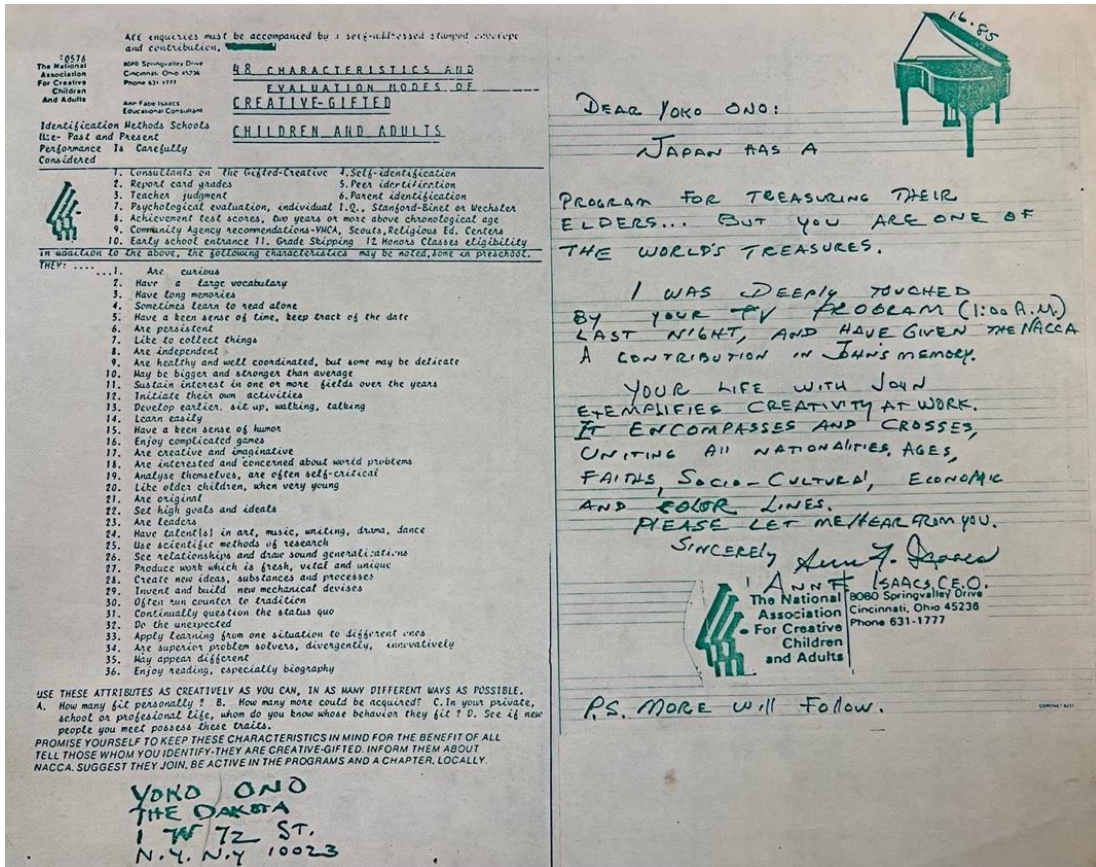
persistence as an advocate for gifted children sustained her for most of her life. Ann's nature as an outspoken advocate lasted beyond her time with the NAGC and transferred to creativity once she was removed from the NAGC in 1974. However, her commitment did not falter—as she founded the National Association for Creative Children and Adults (NACCA) just a few years later and a journal for this organization as well.

Ann recognized this as a new opportunity to connect with all people, not just the gifted. However, this new emphasis on creative individuals, rather than simply gifted individuals, was not a significant departure from the topic and task that had invigorated the early years of her life. When giftedness could not be a direct hammer, it was still in her tool belt.

Ann's boldness and tireless efforts for the NAGC and the *GCQ* made her a household name in gifted education. She became a lifelong friend and supporter of Torrance, likely because of her fearlessness when it came to supporting gifted children and her love for creativity. While the initial contact of Ann and Torrance was not found for this study—and it may have happened over the phone.

A letter Ann wrote in 1985 is emblematic of her fearlessness as an advocate. In 1985, Ann wrote a letter to Yoko Ono, thanking Yoko for the creative gifts that she gave to the world. Marjorie recalls that this letter was likely well received because Ann had an autographed photo of Yoko Ono that she adored. This letter demonstrates Ann's belief that no one was above contacting if they had a mutual reason to connect—and creativity served as that mutual reason for Ann. Before being removed from the NAGC, gifted children were the point of connection for Ann.

Figure 13 Draft letter to Yoko Ono (Isaacs, 1985)



Note. Ann contacted anyone and everyone who she felt had a specific reason to support gifted children. Yoko Ono was no exception.

Ann's persistence and sustained interest in gifted children ensured her voice would be heard in the field and that gifted children would not be overlooked.

Ann's Creativity, and Many Special Talents

In 2021, Marjorie recalled her mother's creativity. "She was really creative—oh my God, she was so creative. And she would stick with things she was mediocre at too." Ann's devotion to creativity was lifelong. However, evidence suggests that her academic and theoretical consideration of creativity was bolstered by E. Paul Torrance. Torrance was a leader in the field of gifted education—one that Ann was unafraid to contact

despite his impressive credentials. Again, her persistent advocacy for gifted children defined her life. Ann's close and long-standing friendship with E. Paul Torrance is documented through dozens of letters throughout the 1960s and 70s, as well as his willingness to support the NACCA (National Association for Creative Children and Adults) once she was separated from the NAGC. In the early 1970s, Ann and Susan even made a trip together to Athens, Georgia to visit Paul and his wife, Pansy, in their home. According to Susan (2022):

I heard the name Paul Torrance. A lot, a lot. And I think they may have been on the phone with some regularity, which is very telling because my mother did indeed hate the telephone.

Not only did Ann's collaboration with researchers boost the prestige of the NAGC and the *quarterly*, but it also shifted her own views on giftedness. Throughout Ann's time at the NAGC, beginning in the 1960s and through the 1970s, Torrance almost always had the first article in every issue of the quarterly. There were only four exceptions to Torrance's placement at the front of the *Quarterly*. Torrance's love and interest in creativity was infectious. His influence was so profound that Ann continued to devote her life to creative individuals and to increasing the creativity of all long after her time at the NAGC. The practice of creativity also extended into Ann's home life.

More than just theoretical, Ann was a highly creative individual herself. Ann's works of visual art, musical compositions, and daily acts of creativity made it more than just theory for her the journal. Ann sang, composed music, put the psalms to music, and had artwork hung throughout the city of Cincinnati. But even public displays of creativity

were not enough. Ann felt that creativity made life beautiful and interesting. And that creativity could benefit everyone.

Later in life, Ann wrote dozens of short stories about how to bring creativity into one's daily life separate from significant creative works. Ann possessed both big and little C creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) and encouraged it in others throughout her life. While with the NAGC, she was able to make the encouragement and growth of creative individuals a priority which would last beyond her tenure with the organization. Creativity would become Ann's hammer—as Susan called it—once the plight of gifted children was somewhat removed from her purview by her exit from the NAGC in 1974.

Gardening promotes creativity. The reason is that there is always something new going on in a garden. It is known that the intake of new experiences is one of the variables which promoted creative productivity. (Isaacs, 1998, para. 3)

Ann's above quote demonstrates the multifold way in which creativity influenced her.

This influence in turn trickled down to the journal throughout Ann's life. Creativity was a critical piece of Ann's gifted identity. It enriched her. And she felt strongly it could enrich the lives of everyone. The Little C creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) of gardening combined with her assessment of how this relates to creative productivity mirrors the way in which Ann's life influenced her practice and therefore the organization that she founded. As a lifelong believer in creativity, Ann preferred to surround herself with individuals who also recognized the critical role of creativity in people's lives.

Creativity as a theory comes to Ann after the initial founding years of the NAGC—by the 1960s in the form of E. Paul Torrance. However, the practice of creativity was near

and dear to Ann throughout her life. The importance of creating for her was underscored by both her daughters and evidenced through the sheer number of creative pieces in the archival record. Despite Ann's extraordinary creative nature, she saw creativity as something that everyone could benefit from and enjoy. According to Ann, "Creativity elevates our spirits. So, it can easily be seen why being creative provides a balance to cope with unwelcome stress. This is in everyone's life" (Isaacs, 1995). This egalitarian consideration of creativity has remained constant in the field of gifted education—while there are some gifted individuals in the world, creativity can be useful and enriching to all (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013).

The role that creativity played in Ann's life had a significant influence on the NAGC that continues to be felt in 2022. Ann's privileging of Torrance in the journal and her own personal commitments to creative contributions ensured that creativity would be a mainstay of the field of gifted education even beyond her time at the NAGC and past her death. Creativity was also a way for Ann to feel that she was doing good for all, not just the gifted. She told Marjorie that she was proud the NACCA could benefit everyone and not just gifted individuals.

Not only believing in creativity as a useful theory and practice for the gifted, Ann's own giftedness was reflected in her Big C and Little C Creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) that was a force throughout her life. Based on her own experiences of creativity and how it enriched her life, she brought creativity to the forefront of gifted education through Torrance. Again, Ann's identity and personal experiences influenced the field of

gifted education in ways that cannot be understated. Ann was a creative force, and so too the NAGC and the journal became a force for promoting creativity.

Ann the Big C Creative

Figure 14 Psalm set to music, written by Ann, on the topic of peace—as part of a special issue of the *Quarterly on peace* (Isaacs, 1969b)

The image shows a page of a musical score for piano, harp, or organ. The title is "PEACE- SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT". The words are from the Book of Psalms. The music is written in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The score is divided into two main sections: "Con spirito" and "Moderato, con serenità". The "Con spirito" section consists of two staves of music. The "Moderato, con serenità" section begins with the lyrics "Seek peace and pursue it." and continues with "For there is a future for the man of peace." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "ritard" and "Fine". At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: "© Copyright 1970 by Ann Fabe Isaacs, Psalmody Publishing Co., 8080 Springvalley Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226" and the text "PEACE: BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS".

Note. This piece was like the hundreds of compositions created by Ann to provide music for psalms—almost none of which appeared in the *Quarterly*

Ann engaged frequently in Big C creativity—1,000 sketches, 35 oil paintings, and 200 musical compositions during her lifetime (Isaacs, 1994)—some of which were published, publicly performed, and on display. Archival records contain much of her visual and musical art for 21st century listeners. Ann’s humorous Snorata, as well as her Holocaust Meditation, and psalmodies were recorded and publicly performed. She also hoped that her religious compositions would bring solace and enjoyment to others.

Ann and Ted sought a place for her psalms to be published through Jewish and musical communities and contacts. Throughout Ann’s life, she worked to receive the public recognition of her private, tireless, efforts but more fundamentally, she hoped that everyone would share their greatest talent with the world. According to Susan (2022):

There were still billions, at least millions of gifted, talented, and creative children and adults...all she has to do is look around her and people who weren’t making good use of their talents, who could do so much more with their lives. And they just, for whatever reasons, they weren’t.

Occasionally, Ann’s works were publicly performed in Cincinnati and there was at least one of her musical compositions performed in Athens, Georgia. Music seemed to serve a deeper purpose than public recognition for Ann though. According to Susan:

Music...became progressively more important to her as her life wore on. And I think she played every day...And I think when her father died, which was when I was about 11, she started playing at six in the morning. I think she worked through a lot of her grief by playing music.

Not only did Ann promote music and creativity to others, but it created meaning and helped her through challenging parts of her life. Musical and artistic talent were always considered areas of giftedness to Ann (Isaacs, 1963a; Isaacs, 1963c). As early as 1957(d),

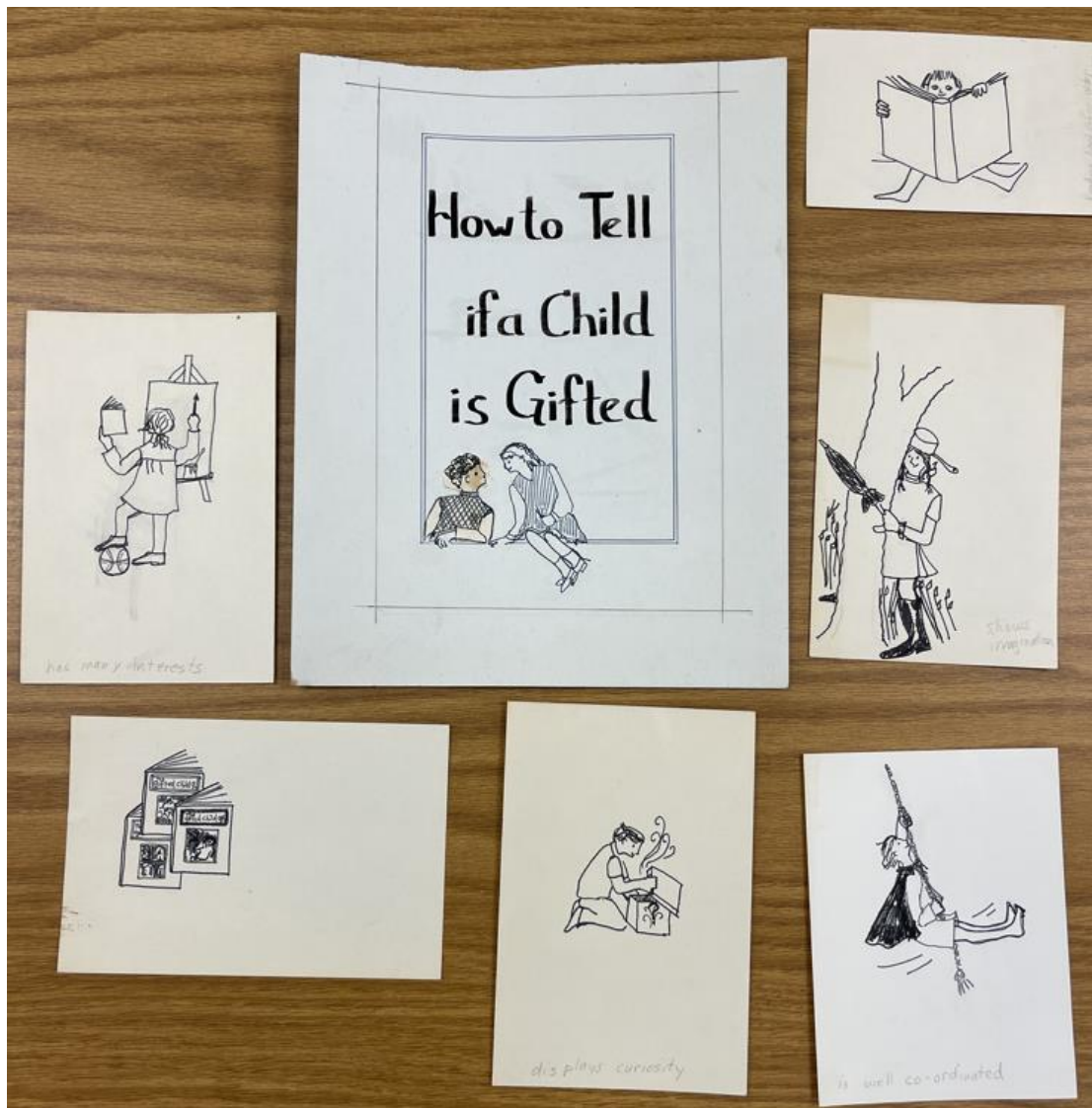
she used the anecdote of a musically gifted child to illustrate broader challenges for all gifted children.

Because Ann's own experiences colored her views of giftedness, she felt compelled to include music and other artistic areas in her picture of giftedness. In the 1952 Ohio Association of Gifted Children governing documents, Ann defined gifted children as:

(1) One who has exceptionally high intellectual capacity and (2) one who is gifted or talented in a specific direction as in art, music, mechanics, or social leadership.
(Isaacs, 1952, p. 1)

This expanded view is widely accepted among the gifted education community today (NAGC, 2022c; Schroth & Helfer, 2017). While the recognition of musical talents as an area of giftedness was important to Ann, judged by the frequency with which she selected articles for the *Quarterly* on this topic (Essex, 1963; Hanson, 1957; Isaacs, 1963a; Labunski, 1963; Maddy, 1963; Wilson, 1957), it was not a singular crusade for her in the way that creativity was. Although Ann did not appear to influence musical giftedness in a significant way, it is pleasing to know that her ideas eventually came around with the support of research and the gifted education community (NAGC, 2022c).

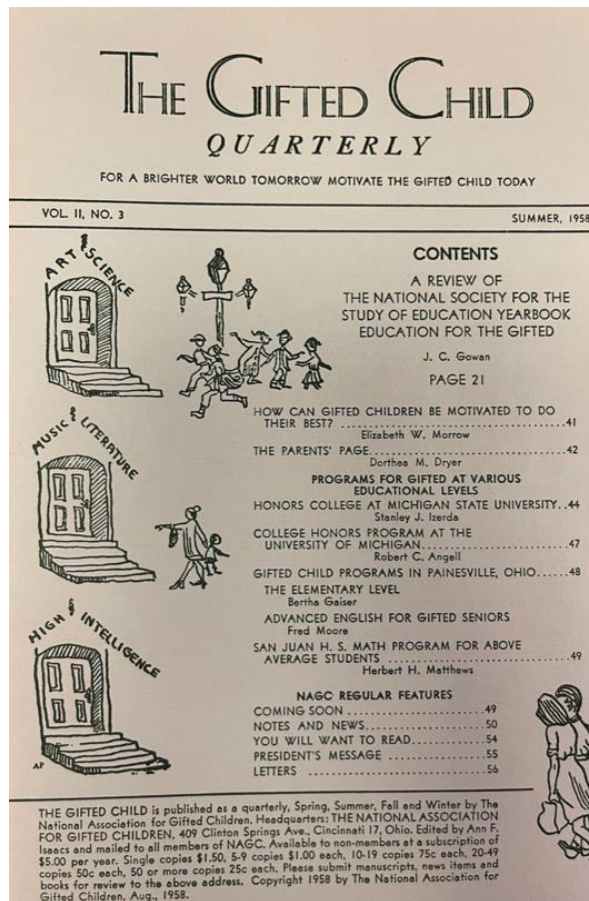
Figure 15 Undated images, presumably drawn by Ann, that symbolize characteristics of giftedness (Isaacs, n.d.-g)



Note. Written in pencil is the following text counterclockwise from the top left, “has many interests,” “displays curiosity,” “is well co-ordinated,” “shows imagination,” “reading books for older” (Isaacs, n.d.-g)

Ann the Little C Creative

Figure 16 Cover of the Summer 1958(a) Issue of the Quarterly with drawings on the front



Note. Drawings such as these appeared throughout the issue and on the covers of the Quarterly when Ann was the editor.

Ann enjoyed many creative pursuits including drawing, painting, and writing, in addition to her numerous musical compositions. Writing seemed to be a place of humor for Ann. Most of her short stories are personal in nature and reflect her sense of levity about the world and the irony of experience. Ann's experiences as a neighbor and keeper of the home were particularly ripe fruits for inspiration.

Perhaps I have been enamored with too many fairy tales...But rethinking my sweeper adventures makes me feel my good fairy informed me my bad fairy had vowed when I was yet a babe in the crib, I would be destined to experience bad sweepers all life long, until my Prince Charming kisses me awake from this sleep. When Teddy gets home, I think I shall ask him to kiss me and the new sweeper as well. There must be a modern way to break decades-old-sweeper-hexes (Isaacs, 1992).

In contrast to Ann’s musical work and visual arts which were displayed publicly and for which she sought publication, there is no evidence that Ann’s short stories were ever offered up to publishers. It seemed that writing in this way was for the enjoyment of Ann and possibly acquaintances rather than a public audience. At most, she saw them as being part of her collective autobiography—which she labelled the sweeper story amongst. They were for private enjoyment particularly in the later years of her life. However, Ann may have thought that in some way they would encourage Little C Creativity in others too, spreading the joy of creativity.

Frequently Ann wrote short stories that demonstrated her own use of Little C Creativity and how it could benefit others. Unpublished articles included *Creative Maintenance for a Recalcitrant Drawer Pull* (Isaacs, 1993b), *Appreciating a Home of Elegance, or The Value of Creativity to the Solution of Tangential Problems* (Isaacs, 1995), *A New Kitty’s Looks and Name: Creative Choices* (Isaacs, 1993a) are just a few of the numerous examples. In an undated piece of writing, *Reclaiming Favorite Accessories*, Ann said “Creativity brought results with speed and the accompanying lift of the spirits provided the best result of all” (Isaacs, n.d.-d).

The cats of the Isaacs family were also a source of inspiration for Ann. Throughout her life, dozens of short stories were devoted to the antics of the family cats. The cats provided humor and irony in Ann’s writing while also being cherished members of the family. So important that the cats sometimes appeared in her public work—see the image from the *GCCQ* in the motherhood section. The Isaacs’ cats provided a personal and

professional connection for Ann. She wrote short stories about her cats' quirky behavior throughout her life.

The naming of cats also became part of Ann's interests in gifted education. One of the last cats Ann would own during her life was named Dr. Rorschach because the cat had coloration like an inkblot test (Isaacs, 1993a). The supposed final kitten of Ann's lifetime was Omega—named for the pattern on his stomach as well as the likelihood that this would be their last kitten, aligning with the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Decades earlier, Ann had dedicated the 1971 and 1972 issues of the *GCQ* to a Greek Gods theme. Thus, Ann often blurred the lines between public and private demonstrated by the picture above. Ann's life at home simultaneously informed and challenged her life with the NAGC and the *GCQ*.

Ultimately, Ann's identity influenced the work that she did. Her shortsightedness and forethought were both a result of her own experiences. Ann's life was shaped by her race, class, gender, religion, marriage/motherhood status, and ability. Ann's giftedness as well as her intersections of identity influenced the NAGC and subsequently the *GCQ* in ways that are still felt to this day. Ann's giftedness made her a person who could and would establish the NAGC and the *GCQ*. However, the decisions that she made within the organization and the journal reflected many facets of her identity.

Ann's own creativity influenced her proclivity to write and speak about this topic in both her professional and personal life. She was a visual artist, singer, and musical composer but also engaged in everyday acts of creativity. Much of Ann's art was religious in nature, setting psalms to melodies that could be used in both Hebrew and

English, but some was also quite silly. The archives contain a public performance of a “Snorata.” Ann composed this piece that was made up of many musical instruments as well as the happy birthday song, birds chirping, and actual snoring. According to Rogers, this was inspired by Ann’s husband’s snoring.

Marjorie remembers that in her old age, Ann would use random household objects—such as salad tongs—to pick things up off the floor that she could no longer reach. This creativity became a focal point of Ann’s interest in giftedness by the time she was asked to leave the NAGC in 1974 which allowed her to form the National Association for Creative Children and Adults (NACCA) shortly thereafter. Although the work of the NACCA is outside of the scope of this portrait, it is certainly telling that creativity was a cornerstone of Ann’s interests at that point. The critical role that creativity played for Ann influenced her ideas about giftedness as well as what was published in the *GCQ*, and which researchers got top billing in the quarterly. The influence of creativity on Ann and subsequently on the field of gifted education cannot be overstated.

Intersections of Ann: The Private Spills into the Public

Ann’s private life was remarkable—particularly her relationship with her husband. This allowed her to capitalize on her giftedness that prompted her sense of duty, sustained persistence, and creativity. These facets of identity were both mitigated and propelled by her race, class, gender, and ability. In turn, these facets of identity and her giftedness are reflected in Ann’s lifetime of public work as a founder, publisher, and advocate for gifted education.

Ann the Founder

There needs to be an active search for the gifted and talented, no matter how great, or how little would be discovered. We need to have trained scouts to seek the gifts and talents of our youth. These consultants should be available to every school and youth working agency. Teachers in particular should be trained to recognize the gifted, and encourage them to use these new found skills in positive ways for their own and other persons' happiness. Schools must begin to teach that the role of mankind is to use their abilities to serve fellow man, and is even more important for the gifted to recognize, and accept. (Isaacs, 1967c, p. 198)

Ann saw unlimited potential in gifted children. And she saw the way in which gifted children could change the world. Ann's purpose of gifted education was for the positive outcomes that gifted individuals would provide in their contributions to the world. She also saw gifted children entering the public school system and becoming in her words, average, and/or chronic underachievers. This is where Ann saw her role—to advocate for these children. This message stayed central to Ann throughout her life and especially during her time with the NAGC. The bookmark/membership form (Isaacs, n.d.-e) below demonstrates Ann's ultimate purpose in founding the organization and the journal.

Figure 17 Bookmark/membership form encouraging membership in the NAGC (Isaacs, n.d.-e)



Note. This undated artifact repetitively names the need to support gifted children. This reflects Ann’s “hammer” of beliefs about the organizational why.

In contrast to the talent development paradigm that has become increasingly influential in contemporary gifted education research—one that aligns well with advocacy for excellence (Dai & Chen, 2013; Dai & Coleman, 2005; Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015; Subotnik & Rickoff, 2010)—Ann did not believe that all individuals had the same potential. In an unpublished manuscript written by Ann in 1974(b), she claims:

It may sound great to glibly say everyone is gifted. In depth knowledge of gifted people readily demonstrates how hard they must work to keep their talents in shape functioning at near maximum level. No one of a truly kind heart simply responding with emotion, knowing these facts would in all honesty want to impose such impossible goals on the average or below average child or adult.

This is a critical philosophical foundation for understanding Ann's views of giftedness and recognizing the context of the NAGC and the *GCQ* at the time of founding. Ann believed that certain adults and children were gifted, and their gifts needed to be fostered so that they could be returned to the world ten-fold. This reflects the dominant paradigm in gifted education throughout the 20th century—the gifted child paradigm (Dai & Chen, 2013).

Despite Ann's belief in the gifted child paradigm, she had a very broad conception of how giftedness could appear. This was especially the case when it came to Jewish children and adults, but her openness came across in several ways. According to Susan,

She [Her Mother] just saw giftedness under every rock. And she also knew that intellectual talent was not across the board consistent. So, you might be really good in writing, but really bad at math...It's like she saw one strength that a person had an inclination or excelled at or showed promise in, she saw that as giftedness.

Thus, even though Ann did not believe that everyone was gifted or capable of greatness, she did believe that giftedness appeared in many different forms. The logo that she may

have created, below, demonstrates just a few of the areas in which Ann thought giftedness should be recognized.

Figure 18 Sketch of NAGC Logo, Marjorie believes her mother may have cut and pasted some of the logo work, rather than it being fully of her mother's own creation (Isaacs, n.d.-f)



Note. Within “HI IQ,” Ann also recognized artistic areas of giftedness demonstrated by the symbols in this image

When Ann worked to identify and support the needs of gifted children, she saw herself as part of the bigger system of utilizing the world's best and brightest to make the world a better place. This was her life's contribution to the world, as a gifted person. She recognized the effort required of gifted individuals to hone and share their gifts and she certainly gave that back to the world tenfold.

As time passed however, it seemed that Ann may have recognized the limiting nature of identifying only some individuals as gifted—a circumstance of birth rather than a possibility of cultivation for all. These beliefs were reinforced when it came to Ann's perception of creativity. She herself practiced both Big and Little C (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) creativity, but she thought everyone could practice and benefit from Little C

creativity. Marjorie recalls her mother saying that she liked the NACCA because it was something that everyone could benefit from—Ann believed that everyone’s life would benefit from more creativity. Marjorie remembers her mother saying that creativity gave her such a lift. And that was something Ann thought everyone could participate in—gifted or not.

However, as creativity was not an initial force in the NAGC, or to Ann it seems—the initial impetus for Ann to advocate for the gifted was because of what she believed they could give back to the world if only they were given the proper support through teachers, parents, and counselors that could identify and foster individual talent. Even once Ann had left the NAGC and founded the NACCA, she still believed that gifted individuals were a key to the better future of the world. From her autobiographical sketch—undated, but post-1974 based on reference to the NACCA—Ann wrote:

She feels the role of the gifted-creative-talented individual is to learn to serve the world, making it a better place for all living beings now and to follow so insuring their own happiness. Though extensive work and often sacrifice is required of these persons, all levels of endowment are important to one another. Mankind will succeed in profiting more from the goodness the talented can give when all combine efforts to inspire and help one another and create a climate of acceptance which treasures all living beings including the gifted-talented and creative (p. 2).

Ann saw this as her primary role in founding the NAGC and may have recognized her own role in providing extensive work and making sacrifices to serve the world. Ann’s willingness to sacrifice so much of her time and energy for multiple decades for gifted children exemplifies her extraordinary persistence. Her giftedness made her work and legacy possible.

Ann the Advocate

We would wish that all students once interested in the gifted become champions of their cause. We would wish that all parents once apprised of their children's potential, never lost faith in them, always being a fount of courage for their offspring. We would wish that teachers and principals aware of a child's abilities would personally become his advisors and angel guardians. The question is how do we make these dreams come true? -A.F.I. (Isaacs, 1962b, p. 115)

In Ann's first act as an advocate for gifted children, she founded the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952 (Isaacs, 1952). This organization was referenced in a 1954 article from the *Journal of Teacher Education* as a source of help for teachers of the gifted (Davis, 1954) though it was not connected to Isaacs. In addition, the Davis source from the *Journal of Teacher Education* was cited by Robins and Jolly in *Historical Perspectives: The Establishment of Advocacy Organizations* (Robins & Jolly, 2013). In this instance, the organization was still not connected to Isaacs.

The Ohio Association for Gifted Children did not last long as an independent entity. Two years later, Isaacs founded the NAGC in 1954 in Cincinnati. While this is the earliest credited date with the founding of the organization, the articles of incorporation and the journal—written by Ann and signed by locals in her community—were not in place until 1957. If nothing else, this study sheds light on the founder of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children—Ann Fabe Isaacs—a connection that was not made until this study.

Her purpose in founding the NAGC, was to contribute to the ability of gifted children to fulfill their full potential to society. She worked tirelessly in this effort, which supported her own beliefs in the amount of time and effort required for the gifted to live up to their potential. Because Ann believed that gifted children would save the world

from all manner of ills, she felt compelled to ensure that public school education did not remove the potential and talent from gifted children.

Advocacy for Special Populations, Excellence, and Legislation

Ann experienced the world as a White woman. While the community in which she lived was diverse, according to Susan's recollections, Ann still experienced life through her specialized scope as a member of the privileged racial class. Many of the children and adults she worked with were from her own Jewish community (Psychological Assessment Background Information, 1955-1970). Further, the field of gifted education was not deeply committed to equity during the 1960s and 1970s, so it is not surprising that Ann was not engaging with these issues either.

Ann's initial ideas for the first year, 1957, of the *Quarterly*, came from her practice. The journal was very short. The cover was decorated with Ann's doodles and there was limited academic or research-based input. Therefore, the input of others in the field of gifted education was missing. The input of experts had a great influence on Ann as she herself was not an academic or researcher with an institution. Thus, Ann learned from the field through the journal and other publications. Therefore, because the field was not interested in special populations during Ann's tenure, she likely was also not interested or aware of the needs for these special groups. Further, because Ann experienced life as a largely middle class—as an adult—White woman, it is unsurprising that she did not consider the experiences of children of color or those from other special populations.

Ann's beliefs about gifted children of color are less clearly discernible from the artifacts likely because of the historical period in which Ann served the NAGC. The

needs of children of color were not in the educational foreground beyond the impetus to integrate schools following *Brown v. Board* in 1954, especially considering that many southern states did not integrate until decades after this landmark ruling (Melnick, 2020). In contrast, the White House Conferences on Education in 1960 and 1970 brought together sincere interest in education both for students with disabilities and the gifted. The consideration of the gifted alongside children with disabilities, as the federal government was working on national legislation for these children, made Ann's views on children with disabilities explicit.

Ann's lack of focus on special populations of gifted children reflects much of the historical and cultural context of her life and experiences. Ann's views on advocacy for excellence (Roberts, 2014) however, seem to more likely be a result of her own personal beliefs about giftedness and a reflection of the field at the time. In the 20th century, the predominant paradigm of the field was the gifted child paradigm (Dai & Chen, 2013). Ann's beliefs aligned with this paradigm. Although Ann saw giftedness all around her, her advocacy focused on who she believed to be the small percentage of gifted individuals living in the world. The historical context of solely using IQ tests to measure giftedness for most of the 20th century (Jolly, 2018) reinforced this belief.

Although Susan does not believe that her mother found IQ tests to be the sole indicator of giftedness, they were valuable measures which she used when working with children—including her own. Ann gave the Stanford-Binet IQ Test to her daughters every year—an indication of how seriously she took these assessments. The frequent use

of IQ tests, and the limited number of assessments for identifying giftedness reinforced Ann's beliefs about the oppositional nature of giftedness and disabilities.

When IQ tests were considered the singular method for identifying both giftedness and disability, then it is very difficult to determine that a child is both gifted and has a disability. Reliable measurements were lacking for twice-exceptionality. Further, there was a lack of reliable assessment data to contextualize data that is now considered typical of a twice-exceptional students' IQ assessment results, such as asynchrony (Silverman & Gilman, 2020). Ann's tenure at the NAGC was marked by the limited nature of reliable assessments used to identify giftedness as well as a lack of research on twice-exceptionality. Thus, as Ann was guided by the field, it was not wholly in the direction of advocacy or even recognition for the twice-exceptional child.

Ann's perspectives on the gifted and children with disabilities were made clear through the artifacts likely because of the public discussion and passage of federal legislation on the education of children with disabilities. As an advocate, and a speaker at the national conversations about gifted children, Ann was compelled to provide her perspective.

Ann's 1966(a) editorial, referenced earlier to understand Ann's perspectives on gifted children and children with disabilities, is included below. This documents the passionate advocacy with which Ann approached her work on behalf of gifted children. Further, it demonstrates the success of Ann as an advocate—as she was a chosen speaker for such an event, and her views were reflected in the outcome of the legislation for children with disabilities—gifted children were not included.

Figure 19 1970(f) Editorial demonstrates Ann's voice as an advocate and her views on gifted and exceptional education being connected

1970

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**ARE GIFTED CHILDREN HANDICAPPED OR EXCEPTIONAL?
SOME EDUCATORS WILL CALL THEM ANY NAME
IF A DOLLAR SIGN CAN BE ATTACHED**

Ann F. Isaacs, Exec. Dir.
The National Association for Gifted Children

A PORTION OF THE TESTIMONY GIVEN AT THE HEARINGS ON THE GIFTED AND
TALENTED, CALLED BY THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION,
NOVEMBER, 1970, CHICAGO, ILL.

Every time I hear the gifted being called handicapped, I feel outraged.

In the first place it is deceptive, and dishonest. Educators who would play politics and call the gifted by any name merely to get money for their programs are a disgrace to the profession, or are not themselves gifted, or feel they aren't, so sympathize not with a loathing for this labeling. It must be admitted some who "buy" the term are possibly well intentioned, and are merely going along the paths of their predecessors. I have talked with hundreds of gifted and creative persons to learn their reactions to being classified as handicapped. Almost all of them recoil in horror and dismay at the mere thought. Only rarely is a gifted person handicapped with a disability, or by being gifted. But some non-achievers are willing to hide behind the classification in explaining their lack of accomplishment by stating:

"Gifted means handicapped, you know".

Children who are gifted, learning of this placement — can only have a confused role concept as a result. Further those with a grain of common sense will choose the alternative path open to them. They can escape from the ranks of the gifted — handicapped,

and regress to normal. Many of them do.

In schools numbers of well intentioned administrators lump together in a single classroom all the exceptionalities — retarded, blind, deaf, club foot, cleft palate, crippled, emotionally disturbed and gifted. Does this make sense? Exceptional by dictionary definition can mean unusually fine, but since educators have adopted the term to mean defective — the term gifted *must* be deleted from this grouping.

The willingness of educators to link giftedness with the handicapped is living evidence of inadequate understanding of the gifted concept, as relating to an individual who can do more for society — not less. The gifted can and should be expected to give their talents to the world, but this will not happen through coercive efforts, nor by name calling. That society should be willing to spend more in training this segment among us can be readily agreed, provided we are also training them to be willing to give more. Without this being clearly understood, the gifted grow up under-achieving, or without dedication to use their talents in the widest possible sense for the good of all, in the most far reaching ways possible.

Note. This is the primary article referenced by Rogers (2013) to argue that Ann made an error in her refusal to include gifted children in the federal legislation for exceptional education

Despite being the singular leader of NAGC, and the *Quarterly* during her tenure, Ann's habit of seeing gifted children as oppositional to children with disabilities was not unique. One of the first presidents of NAGC and a confidant of Ann, Walter B. Barbe put it this way in a President's Message in the quarterly, "The educational spotlight, so long on the mentally-retarded child, has now shifted to the gifted child" (Barbe, 1958, p. 55). Barbe is likely referencing the new emphasis on the gifted child through the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Ann's views on the necessary split between gifted children and those with disabilities persisted throughout her life. In Ann's own unpublished "Biographical Background," she states:

Invited to be a Consultant for the U.S. State Dept. of Education, she has declined until such a time as gifted, creative, and talented persons are no longer categorized in that office under Defective-Exceptional-Handicapped which she feels is damaging to these individuals. (Issacs, n.d.-a, p. 1)

There is no date listed for this autobiographical information, but based on a reference to the NACCA, it is evident that Ann held these beliefs even after leaving the NAGC in 1974. Committed to the best services and opportunities for gifted children, Ann spent her life sure of the belief that gifted children should not be included in exceptional education. She was successful in meeting this goal at the federal level.

Ultimately, Ann's experience of life without a disability colored her perceptions of children with disabilities—including those considered gifted. Further, the historical and social context of her lifetime made it difficult for her to see children with both giftedness and a disability. The 1970s was the last time that the federal government seriously considered mandating, or funding gifted education and it was under the umbrella of exceptional children—including those with disabilities. The contemporary advocacy

battle for recognition, funding, and a mandate for gifted education at the federal level is an ongoing struggle (NAGC, 2021a). Rogers felt strongly that Ann's unwillingness to include gifted children under the federal umbrella of gifted children was a misstep—which was part of her chapter on Isaacs and the 2021 interview on the subject (Rogers; 2013). However, the issue is more complicated when more voices are added to the conversation.

The inclusion of gifted education as part of exceptional student education is a challenging issue for the field. Certain states have included gifted children as part of exceptional education, Pennsylvania, and Florida notably (Hafenstein, 2020), while many others have these as a separate category. Exceptional student education has amassed funding and very specific guidelines because of federal legislation and judicial outcomes (Hafenstein, 2020). Some in gifted education would consider this a strength—and a reason to tie gifted education to exceptional education. However, this is not an unanimously held belief.

Despite significant funding, federal recognition, and guidelines for exceptional student education, the field of exceptional student education identifies ongoing challenges to the practice of providing free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities (Kauffman, et al., 2021). Thus, some in the field of gifted education would applaud Ann's advocacy to keep gifted children separate from exceptional education, while others would see it as an unfortunate mistake.

While Ann may have appeared to be a singular leader, she collaborated and learned from trusted confidants. In the case of federal-level advocacy, Torrance was often invited

to the same meetings as Ann, opening special communication between their shared interests and different seats at the table. In 1970, Torrance wrote a letter to Isaacs with advice on the advocacy process of the White House Conference:

I think that there are a variety of ways in which you and NAGC can subtly influence the forums of the White House Conference...In ours, there will be references here and there to giftedness, but there will be no out and out recommendation strictly on the gifted. In fact, our forum will push only two recommendations although we'll list several.

Torrance's friendship with Ann provided her with essential advice and support for how to work within the provided systems. This strategic planning for advocacy supported the NAGC in its efforts to secure funding and support from the federal government, though such support and funding never came through on the federal level.

Advocacy for the States and Collaboration

Ann recognized several challenges for the field of gifted education and saw that some of them could be solved through policy and collaboration. As a national leader, Ann worked to support state legislative efforts in local communities through regional NAGC chapters. As a lifelong resident of Ohio, Ann worked at the state level to make changes to benefit gifted children. Advocacy for policy especially relies on collaboration with leaders and researchers (Hafenstein, 2020). Further, the question of a policy definition of giftedness is a critical piece of this work (Clarenbach & Eckert, 2018), one that Ann had strong feelings about. Ann communicated with numerous researchers and policy makers on behalf of gifted education to advocate for the needs of gifted children.

In 1972, Ann received a letter from Ohio senator Robert Taft Jr. acknowledging receipt of her ideas and opinions considering Ohio-specific legislation concerning gifted

education (Taft, 1972). She worked closely with the Cincinnati chapter of the NAGC throughout her life but was also in close contact with many state organizations. The importance of the state chapters of NAGC cannot be overstated. So much of gifted education is and was controlled at the state level (Hafenstein, 2020) that local NAGC chapters are the lifeblood of critical gifted advocacy work. When the *Quarterly* was only a newsletter in 1957, it routinely included information about state organizations' work and how to start new chapters in their area (Isaacs, 1959a; Isaacs, 1963d; Isaacs, 1968c). Ann prioritized the work of the chapters—especially regarding their progress on state legislation for gifted education.

Figure 20 List of state gifted programs in the Autumn 1960 issue of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* (Isaacs, 1960b)

STATE PROGRAMS FOR GIFTED						AUTUMN, 1960
STATE	NAME AND TITLE OF SUPERVISOR FOR GIFTED	AMT. OF LEGISLATION	DURATION OF LEGISLATION	REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION SOME MANY	NATURE OF INFORMATION REQUESTED	
1. CALIFORNIA	Ruth A. Martinson, Coordinator, Study of programs for gifted	\$137,000	1957-60	x		
2. HAWAII	Robert Bainbridge, Director of the Program for the Gifted	yes				
3. ILLINOIS	David Jackson, Acting Director, the Gifted Child Program				x	
4. MINNESOTA	Mary Pilch, Director		1960-61			
5. NEW YORK	A. Tannenbaum	\$200,000-\$400,000 Proposed	1960-61			
6. N. CAROLINA	C. D. Killian, Chairman Commission to Study the Public Education of Exceptionally Talented Children for the State of North Carolina	yes	1960-61			
7. OHIO	John Slaymaker, Acting Director	\$250,000	1960-		x	
8. OREGON	Bradford Dodson, Consultant on the Education of Able and Gifted Children	\$750,000	1959-61		Gen. info., as to what is being done in the state	
9. RHODE ISLAND	Edward F. Wilcox, Assistant Commissioner of Education	\$ 60,000	7-1-59 to 6-30-60		Legislation, identification programs	
10. TENNESSEE	Vernon L. Johnson, Director of Special Education	\$100,000	1959-61		Grouping, Enrichment Acceleration	
11. WASHINGTON	Eugene H. Smith, Research Coordinator	\$ 57,000	1959-61			

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION	
Based on responses from 18 states:	
Identification	8
Curriculum	6
Financing	1
Legislation	2
General	1

Note. As early as 1960, the NAGC was examining state gifted education policies

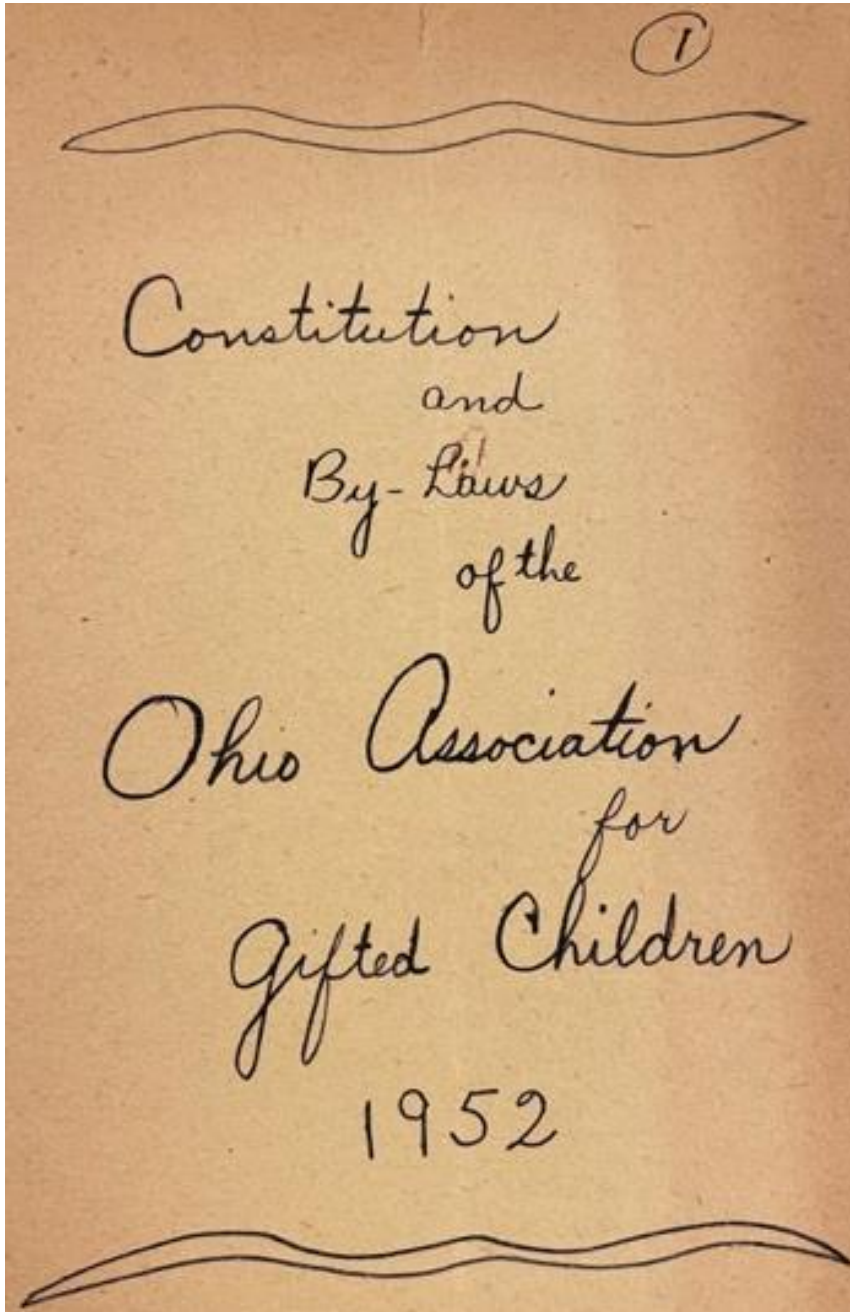
While the chart above demonstrates a modest showing of gifted legislation in 1960, this type of information was provided for state advocates to use as a jumping off point. Similar research is disseminated to gifted advocates in the 21st century with similar goals of advocating for best practices and increased resources for gifted children. One such example is the NAGC's *State of the States in Gifted Education* publications that are released every four years—most recently published in 2019. These resources are critical for as long as gifted education remains under the purview of individual state legislatures. This is a tradition that Ann started in 1960 that has been continued in the 21st century.

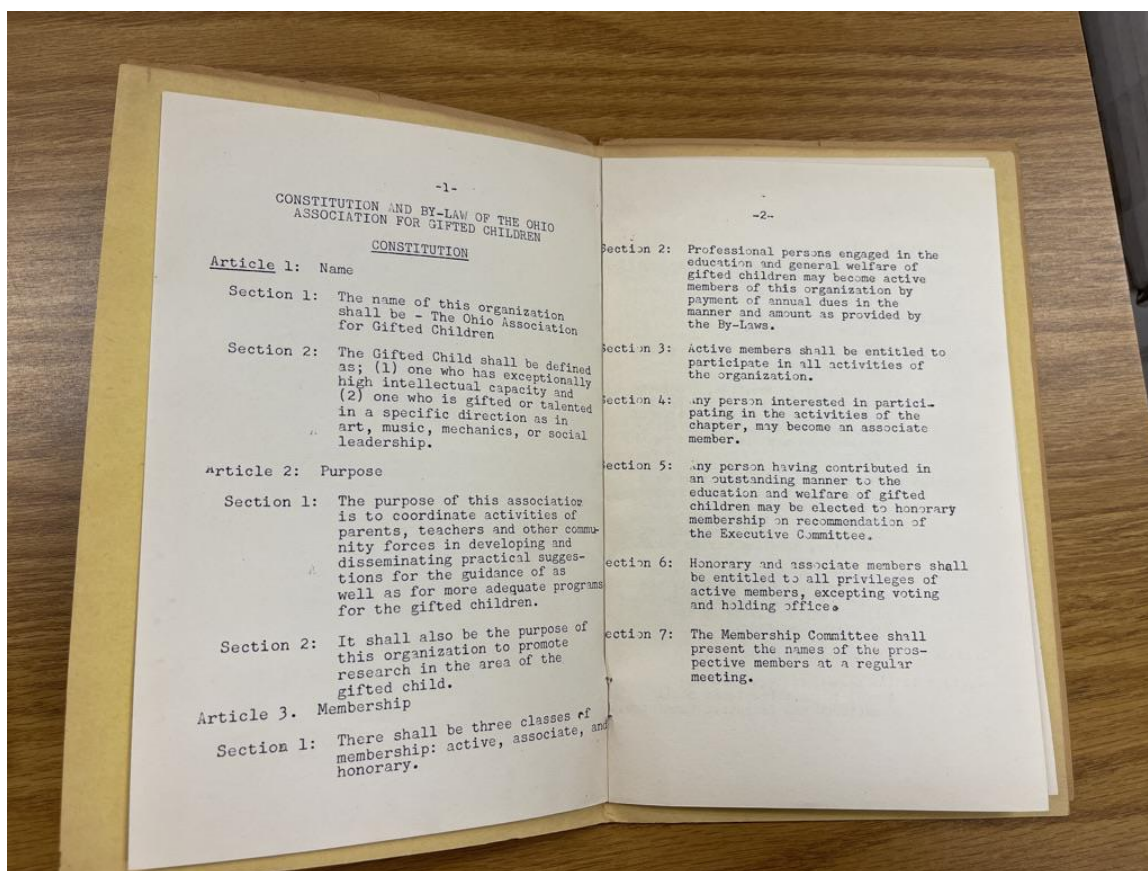
Ann collaborated with many, but also felt a duty to work independently as needed. In 1972, Ann was contacted by congressional representative Michael J. Harrington to provide feedback for a new Select Committee on children (Harrington, 1972). These are localized examples of Ann's advocacy for policy. On a grander scale, Ann's presence at the 1960 and 1970 White House Conferences on Children demonstrates the importance of her voice. Her reputation preceded her. Ann received a letter from an individual working with gifted children in Paris stating, "as the American Cultural Center from Paris told me, you are the best qualified in this field" (Terrassier, 1972). Ann was an advocate who pushed her voice forward and was also sought out for her expertise.

In addition to attending White house conferences, Ann helped establish state and local chapters of NAGC. Ironically, she established the first state chapter—for her home state of Ohio—before she established the national organization. In 1952 Ann founded the

Ohio Association for Gifted Children, two years before the NAGC. The hand-written pamphlet with the constitution and by-laws is pictured below.

Figure 21 Humble Beginnings of the NAGC with a State Organization (Isaacs, 1952)





Note. Cover and interior of 1952 Founding Document for the Ohio Association for Gifted Children which includes a definition of gifted children as “one who has exceptionally high intellectual capacity and (2) one who is gifted or talented in a specific direction as in art, music, mechanics, or social leadership” (Isaacs, 1952, p. 1).

These local chapters both supported and were supported by the NAGC. In addition to providing resources, support, and professional learning opportunities for teachers, parents, and administrators, a major component of local NAGC chapter work came in the form of advocating at state and local levels for recognition and funding for gifted education. Members of local chapters utilized Ann as a resource for advocacy and outreach. In 1970, a member of the Granite City Community Unit mailed Ann the names and addresses of members of the Illinois School Problems Commission—with the request that Ann reach out to secure legislation for gifted education in the state.

As early as 1958, the *GCQ* reported on Florida's practices to support gifted children through Professor MacCurdy at the University of Florida (MacCurdy, 1958). In 1959, as local chapters were increasing in membership and prestige in New York state, Gardiner reported on how matching grants from the state were being used to identify best programming practices for gifted students (Gardiner, 1959, p. 17). In 1960, a report was shared on the practices of Oregon's gifted and talented program that had been funded for three years through the state legislature (p. 44).

Gardiner's 1959 article examined gifted education advocacy in New York and 1960 saw a state study of North Carolina public school programs for the gifted published in the *GCQ* (Bixler, 1960) as well as a broad consideration of state programs for the gifted (Isaacs). Bill Vassar, who worked closely with Ann and the NAGC, presented a paper at the 1967 Council for Exceptional Children convention with suggestions for how states could work together to coordinate legislation and funding (Vassar, 1967). The importance of local chapters in working toward policy support and state funding for gifted education cannot be overstated.

Even in 2022, gifted education funding and policy varies greatly by state—in those states where any funding or policy exist (Gentry et al., 2019)—and much of the legislation and funding is supported through tireless advocates for gifted education (Hafenstein, 2020). An example of this work can be seen in the Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented (CAGT), an affiliate of NAGC. Each spring, CAGT hosts a legislative day where high school seniors can shadow a state legislator and attend a question-and-answer session with the governor (CAGT, 2021). At the Q & A, students,

teachers, researchers, and all advocates of gifted education can ask questions and share policy concerns (CAGT, 2021).

The type of contemporary legislative advocacy practiced amongst state level NAGC affiliates is echoed at the national level with NAGC's annual Leadership & Advocacy Conference (NAGC, 2021e). At this event, advocates for gifted education are prepared to speak to the federal advocacy goals of the NAGC with their state senators and representatives (NAGC, 2021e). When Ann led NAGC, this was work that she primarily did on her own. In 2022, this work is open to so many others—something that reflects broader goals of NAGC.

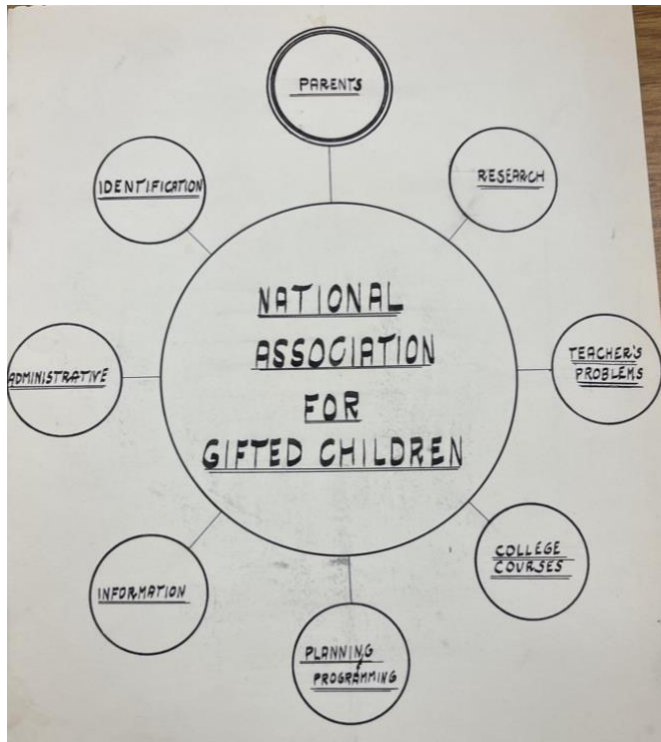
Ann saw a space for everyone to advocate on behalf of gifted children. At the very least, she thought the entire world could benefit from gifted children's gifts if they were properly nurtured. However, she recognized that most advocates for gifted education were gifted themselves or had gifted children. Ann welcomed everyone to the NAGC. Despite criticism of the exclusionary nature of gifted education (Roda & Kafka, 2019), from the very start of the NAGC, Ann made it welcoming for all. She boasted about the numbers of psychologists, counselors, teachers, parents, administrators, and researchers were part of the organization throughout her time with the organization.

By 1960(c), the NAGC had almost 1,000 individual members and 300 organizational memberships (Isaacs). The collaborative nature of Ann's work and open-door policy for advocacy allowed her to create the robust and welcoming organization the NAGC is today. The advent of the internet has replaced Ann's quest for "travelling libraries" that could provide resources and education for all. NAGC provides resources

for advocates, teachers, and parents, that are all free with merely an internet connection.

This is one of Ann's long-lasting influences on the organization and the field.

Figure 22 Figure 22 Undated Figure of NAGC interests



Note. Ann considered the purview of the NAGC to spread information, planning and programming, college courses, teachers' struggles, research, identification, parents, and administrative.

Ann recognized the importance of state and federal policy to support gifted education. But she knew this was only possible through collaboration. Although the NAGC had clear motivation for its own existence and for local chapters, the local and regional nature of education kept diversity in how these goals were enacted. This reflects how gifted education has maintained unique features in programming and services across the U.S. based on state regulations, limitations, and community needs. Advocating for the needs of gifted children appears to have always been a collaborative process, however.

In the earliest years of the NAGC Annual Convention, Ann partnered with other, more well-known, organizations to increase awareness of the NAGC and likely to also reduce costs.

In 1957, Ann presented a paper at the American Association for the Advancement of Science where the NAGC was part a special group included in the meeting. Despite Ann's role as a practitioner, this speech she gave from the earliest years of the NAGC was replete with citations from research-based sources. This contrasts with the majority of Ann's published writing in the journal that most often had no citations at all.

Ann's unique roles as practitioner, teacher, counselor, advocate, and perpetual graduate student made her an ideal collaborator. She could speak from authentic experiences of so many lenses. This created the foundation of collaboration and inclusion that is now representative of the NAGC. Primarily important as an advocacy agenda—collaboration with others—it also serves the needs of those without access to academic research tools. This is a great contribution to the needs of gifted children as well as their advocates.

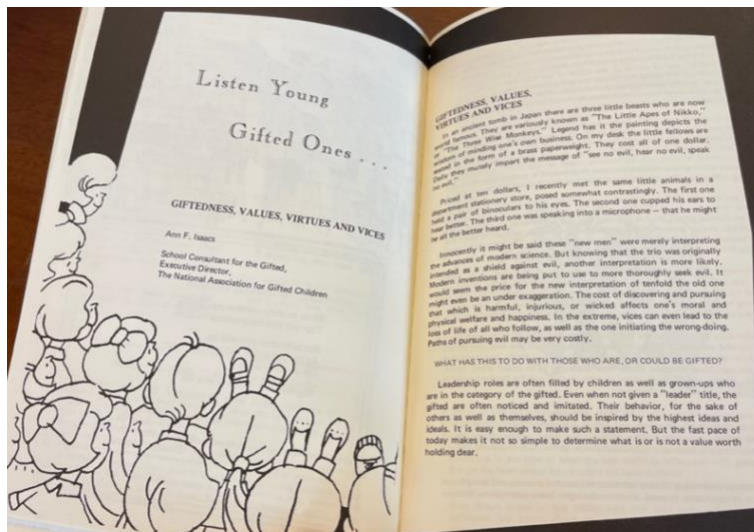
Ann the Publisher

We can all readily agree the problems confronting our times are indeed momentous. We can also agree that effort should be made to increase our chances of finding potentially gifted among us, increasing the possibility of more wise solutions and decisions, to benefit us all. This is the aim of THE GIFTED CHILD QUARTERLY (Isaacs, 1970b).

Ann felt strongly that the NAGC needed a scholarly journal to support its work. This was a goal from the onset—there would be an organization and a scholarly journal. Ann served as the editor of the journal for the entirety of her time with the NAGC. From the newsletter in 1957 to her final year with the organization, 1974, she was editor in chief.

The *Quarterly* signaled both a promise and a challenge for the organization. The organization would be relevant, informed, and give the field a voice through the journal. However, the time and financial constraints of the journal would create significant strain for Ann and the ever-growing list of stakeholders invested in the quarterly. Ann's singular role in establishing and developing the *Quarterly* gave her a deep sense of ownership and strong role within the journal for the duration of her time with the NAGC. Her work set the standard for academic journals in gifted education. Despite wanting the journal to be a place for research-based work, Ann also wanted the journal to be a usable resource by parents and children.

Figure 23 Article written by Isaacs in the 1970(e) Quarterly for gifted children to read



Note. Isaacs wanted the NAGC and the *Quarterly* to be of use to all stakeholders in gifted education which necessarily included gifted children themselves.

Expecting the journal to be able to meet all these tasks, and the needs of so many stakeholders, seemed doomed from the start. However, this issue did not become significant until the 1970s when the number of researchers looking to publish research about gifted children began to soar. There was increased membership in the NAGC, and

an increasing number of individuals interested in working with the organization and getting published in the *Quarterly*. By the end of Ann's tenure with the NAGC, she can be seen clinging to the *Quarterly* through the goal of making it a place for everyone and everything.

Ann's goals of including everyone and everything in the *Quarterly* were noble and ahead of their time. She saw how everyone could help and advocate for gifted children. However, the *Quarterly* was not the only way and place for this to be done. The contemporary NAGC still embodies Ann's mission of inclusion and accessibility. This goal is much more easily met with the advent of the internet. The NAGC website provides a plethora of free resources for teachers, children, and parents. The website is bolstered by multiple publications to support the variety of stakeholders in the gifted education movement. *Teaching for High Potential* and *Parenting for High Potential* bolster the work of the *Quarterly* by providing actionable information for individuals outside of the academy. Diversifying allows for more concentrated and actionable ways for each group of stakeholders to support the NAGC mission. Unfortunately, this was not a goal realized by Ann, who instead sought to make the *Quarterly* everything to everyone. This task became unmanageable.

The *Quarterly* simply could not be everything to everyone. The tension that developed between Ann as a research-practitioner and traditional academics is exemplified through the following letter between her and Renzulli. This is not their only communication, but it demonstrates the way that Ann was moving into the background and periphery of the gifted education movement while young scholars with fresh ideas

were moving forward and trying to secure the *Quarterly* as a space for academic research.

Figure 24 Letter from Dr. Joseph Renzulli to Ann (Renzulli, 1969)

THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

July 23, 1969

Mrs. Ann F. Isaacs, Executive Director
National Association for Gifted Children
8080 Springvalley Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

Dear Ann:

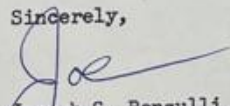
Thank you for the kind words regarding the brochure describing my new Fellowship Program. Please let me know approximately how many copies of this brochure you would need for readers of the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. If I cannot supply you with enough copies for all of our readers I could write a brief statement describing the program for a forthcoming issue of the *GOQ*.

Will you please send me the name and address of the person who will be in charge of the program at the New Orleans meeting. I would like to submit a paper and perhaps suggest the names of a few other persons who might be interested in presenting papers dealing with their work on giftedness and creativity.

With regard to your question about helping gifted children to integrate and to accept the concept of giftedness, I agree with you wholeheartedly that this is indeed a big issue. But I am not sure that I can agree that as many as 90% are rejecting giftedness and would like to know how you arrived upon this figure?

Will you please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience regarding the chairman of the New Orleans program as it will take me some time to prepare a paper and to enlist the assistance of others who may wish to participate.

Sincerely,


Joseph S. Renzulli
Associate Professor
of Educational Psychology

JSR:am

STORRS, CONNECTICUT 06268

Note. The third paragraph exemplifies the tension between research and practice emerging between Ann and the field.

For decades, Ann had been making statements about gifted children's needs without a citation or research-based support to be found. She did educate herself about the field through reading Terman, Hollingsworth, and other early giants of the field. However, she lacked the credentials to make such broad statements without research. She went largely unquestioned until the 1970s.

The reason that Ann was typically not questioned was likely two-fold. What Ann said made practical sense. When there the field lacked research to support what she said, there was anecdotal evidence that was seen during her lifetime, and which is still frequently seen by practitioners today. Hallmarks of best practice—enrichment, differentiation, unique affective needs, acceleration, bolstering student interests, creativity training—were supported by Ann without citations even when the research support was there.

In addition, it was challenging to question Ann. Her charisma, her stubbornness, and the massive amounts of work she had done for the gifted education community was difficult to challenge. However, by the end of the 1960s, the academic support for the gifted child and research in the field was beginning to develop respect from the broader academic and educational community. Ann could no longer rest on the history of her work for the NAGC and the *GCQ* when the academic community was becoming so vocal about gifted education. Renzulli's (1969) recognition of Ann's comment—yes, but where did you get this information—is emblematic of this issue coming to light. The organization, journal, and the field had outgrown Ann. This growth spurt becomes public in the *Quarterly*.

In the 19650s and early 1960s, Ann rarely occupied more than a few pages in the journal. However, from the late 1960s into the early 1970s, she was taking up increasingly more space. And the space she used was typically far from academic—with few to no citations. In the first volume of the 1973 *Quarterly*, there are 16 articles including letter from the president as well as research-based writing. Of those, six are written by Ann. She justified her increased presence in the journal through her desire to make the journal one that students could also use.

In the same issue, Ann had both a “Project for Gifted Boys and Girls” related to Greek Myths as well as an acrostic like a children’s book. By the early 1970s, Ann had been saying that gifted children need to be told that they are gifted and need to understand what that means—including by reading the *Quarterly*. It just so happens that when she finally begins making this process visible in the journal is also when there are increasingly more individuals doing research on the gifted that would benefit from publishing by the *Quarterly*.

One way that Ann mandated her increasing number of pieces in the journal was through themed issues. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several themed issues of the *Quarterly* began to appear. The issues from 1969 had a theme of peace, 1970 issues had a focus on physically and academically talented children, 1971 and 1972 issues looked to the Greeks, 1973 was focused on nature, and 1974 honored leaders in the field.

As Rogers (2014) pointed out, ironically the 1974 series starts with Ann on the cover—the last year which she would have such a space in the NAGC. These themed issues were not preceded by a “call for papers,” based on the data collected for this study,

to address the theme. Whether themes were not chosen far enough in advanced to advertise or if Ann did not have that as part of her process, the result was that themed issues had articles written by Ann that were tied to the theme. This would be in addition to any series she was continuing and the editorial. This enabled Ann to maintain her voice within the *Quarterly* despite a growing academic readership and an increasingly vocal group of NAGC officers. Ironically, Ann's voice would be stifled just when the organization and journal that she had built were beginning to gather steam.

Ann, The Founder of the National Association of Creative Children and Adults

In the Autumn 1974 issue of the *Quarterly*, Ann provided her farewell to the organization and journal that she had single-handedly built for the field of gifted education. In the issue, she invited NAGC members to follow her to her new endeavor, the NACCA. However, she also shared her disagreements with the Board that was requesting her removal.

Figure 25 Ann's closing remarks to the readers of the Quarterly (Isaacs, 1974c)

Secondly I am troubled with the problem of how to respond in good conscience with the labors of the sweat of my brow – to those interested in my efforts – who themselves are working under nomenclature which can only bring destruction and negative attitudes to the gifted. The reference is to calling the gifted handicapped and exceptional. I am personally anguished and I know I speak for thousands of others who have given this careful thought – each time I hear the gifted called defective.

What solutions can you suggest?

Sincerely,
Ann F. Isaacs,
Founder NAGC
Founder NACCA

Note. Based on this statement, it appears the question as to whether to include the gifted under the title of “exceptional children” was the compromise that both the Board of the NAGC and Ann were unwilling to make.

Ann's unwillingness to compromise—a strength when it came to energizing her single-minded advocacy work for gifted education—may have led to her removal from the organization. The issue as to the inclusion of gifted children under exceptional children was too much for her to reconcile in 1974. Ann's inability to compromise on this point reflects the historical context of her life. Calling "handicapped" children "defective" was not a unique feature of Ann. Such language—and the connotative implications of such language—was typical of the time in which she lived. Thus, she felt strongly that the gifted were not defective, and so they should not be lumped in with children who were considered as such.

Experiencing the NAGC and the *Quarterly* almost as an extension of herself made Ann's removal from the organization even more painful. Ann's inexhaustible advocacy for the needs of gifted children was the gift that kept on giving—and what gave contemporaries of the gifted education movement a home today. Unfortunately, her determination and success at times became stubbornness.

Marjorie recalls that it was difficult for her mother to even work with a secretary because she was so single-minded in her focus. Susan remembers Ann's end with the NAGC on the federal courthouse steps—nearly facing a lawsuit between the board and Ann. Once the Board had officially requested Ann step down, it was an abrupt end to Ann's association with the organization and the journal. Reflecting upon this unceremonious removal, Marjorie knows why her mother had to be removed:

They took it away from her because they wanted to grow it and they were not going to be able to grow it with her at the head...No one could work for her...All I know is that she decided she was going to found the next organization...And my dad said, "I don't know how she's done this."

Although the NAGC and the *GCQ* could not have begun or grown in its first two decades without Ann, by the mid-1970s, she was in the way of it reaching its full potential. She also was at ideological odds with the board of the organization she had founded. Unwilling to give up on gifted children and unwilling to consider them “exceptional,” just to secure federal funding, Ann founded the NACCA simultaneously to leaving the NAGC. It had similar goals to the NAGC, but Ann felt it could help more people—because everyone could be creative.

Ann, The Whole

For Ann, there was a need to be publicly recognized and to contribute to the good of the world in the way that she hoped all gifted individuals would. This question of identity also propelled Ann’s work though she may not have seen herself that way. In some sense, she had the ideal life for a woman in the 20th century—healthy children, supportive and kind husband, community relationships through the city, her creative work, and her Synagogue.

Friedan’s “problem that has no name” in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) became a nearly universally agreed upon experience for women like Ann—making it less surprising that she got involved in such extensive intellectual and public work.

Fortunately for the field of gifted education, Ann was not contented to simply be a housewife and mother. Susan (2022) recognizes discontentment as to why her mother was consumed by this work:

...On a profound level, I don’t think that she [Ann] had a really strong sense of self. I’m sure she would disagree with me vociferously, but I don’t think she did. And I think it was that organization and her contacts locally, nationally, internationally that gave her a sense of self-importance and self-worth. That was what kept her going.

The field of gifted education should rejoice at the sacrifices Ann made to cement her own sense of self through tireless advocacy for gifted children.

Ultimately, Ann's overlapping, and co-constitutive identities made her the unique person who was right for the job of founding the NAGC. She cared deeply for the plight of gifted children and likely because of her class status had both the time and resources to devote to the organization and the journal. However, Ann's devotion, predicated upon questions of self-worth, sometimes took a toll on her daughters. She simply could not do it all. Ann was able to do much of it.

With the help of her husband's financial and emotional support for her work, she was able to give so much of herself to the gifted community which left a lasting mark on the field. The remainder of the portrait will consider how Ann's experiences and identity made her create the organization and journal that are now the primary voices for gifted education in the United States and how her influence can still be seen today. Dr. Witty identified the essence of Ann very simply when speaking with Dr. Krippner. He said, "You are right about Ann Isaacs: She is a wonderful person with a sincere interest in the gifted child." (Krippner, 1963)

Chapter Five: Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

As an aid in the solution of the many problems confronting man, it is not farfetched to assume that all potential resources would be valued, including the gifted one. Yet though it is one hundred years since the St. Louis schools introduced the double track, flexible promotion plan in 1968 (18), the school and/or teacher exhibiting special interest in the gifted child remains rare.

In the ensuing years thousands of articles and hundreds of books have been published, exploring the various aspects of giftedness. Beyond a doubt, some of these contributions such as that of Terman (21) and Torrance (21, 22) will endure for many years to come. The writing in this area is largely repetitious and affords little insight into the dynamics of the basic problems, relating instead to superficial, tangential issues. For the most part students in the field can only anticipate disappointment as they seek solutions to recurring problems leading to the loss of talent (1). (Isaacs, 1968a, p. 1). Note: numbers in parentheses are Isaacs' original parenthetical citations

Isaacs' quest to constantly improve gifted education is echoed by the purpose of this portrait. Using the tools of the historian, the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs has been constructed to provide new insights into the National Association for Gifted Children as well as the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. Despite being removed from the organization in 1974, and dying in 2001, Isaacs' presence is still felt in the NAGC and the *GCQ*, by those who knew her. Ideally, those who engage with this portrait will know Ann Fabe Isaacs too. She was a prolific writer, artist, and composer whose numerous lifelong contributions enriched the lives of gifted children.

Portraiture and Feminist History/Biography

In some ways, portraiture and feminist theory are contradictory. Portraiture insists on viewing through the lens of a participant-constructed “goodness” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) while feminist lenses of viewing the world are often called “feminist critique” (Tyson, 2006). Feminist critique is inherently critical of subjects that reinforce and/or fail to consider women’s oppression (Tyson, 2006). Feminist history and biography maintain much of the foundation from feminist theory—an insistence on the consideration of women, gender, and other marginalized actors and marginalizing identities (Alpern et al., 1992; Lerner, 1979; Morgan, 2006; Pederson, 2000; Scott, 1986; Zinsler, 2012), but some of the differences produced from the historical lens provide a different richness to the lens for viewers (Lerner, 1979). Insisting upon the consideration of women and other marginalized actors as whole—with both goodness and flaws changes the focus and nature of historical inquiry as well as the outcomes of historical writing (Lerner, 1979; Scott, 2011).

Feminist biography requires the whole consideration of individual women—including categories of both privilege and oppression, as well as expressions of positive and negative (Alpern et al., 1992; Pearce, 2014; Scott, 1986). Feminist biography’s insistence on the mundane and the remarkable (Alpern et al., 1992) allows for portraiture’s examination of the universal within the specific (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Neither portraiture or feminist biography suggest misrepresentation through an overly critical or celebratory lens—both ideologies require a deeply situated context to examine the choices of actors under consideration. The preface with historical

context for each section of the portrait in chapter four serves to contextualize the examination of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

While “seeing the good” could be considered a limitation of portraiture, it is not intended to be—as seeing the good should not prevent a consideration of the whole which includes the negative parts of the subject under consideration (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Pairing feminist history and biography—with an eye for critique, as well as holistic representation—with portraiture ensures a nuanced and authentic representation. Ann Fabe Isaacs has been considered from this holistic and collaborative framework that insists on rich description and exposition of critical contextual information.

21st Century Analysis on 20th Century Actions

The preeminent scholar of the history of gifted education, Jennifer Jolly, argues that “historical perspective is necessary so that present-day contributions can be properly and accurately recognized” (Jolly, 2005, p.14). This is an argument for the study of history, especially for the ways in which historical inquiry can shed light on the present. A recent article from the *British Medical Journal* explores the ways in which contemporary actors can respectfully consider the actions of individuals from a different historical period (Sheather, 2020). While Sheather’s article considers the recent widespread calls to remove statues of complicated historical figures—notably the father of the speculum, J. Marion Sims, (Sheather, 2020) the argument is helpful for situating the analysis of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Two blind alleys should be rejected at the outset: “presentism”—the idea that past acts should be judged by present standards; and “historical relativism”—the idea that acts can be judged only by the standards of their time. Neither one speaks to the complexity of history or our moral lives. Neither fully acknowledges the paradox that

morals can change rapidly (even fairly recently held opinions can seem out of date), yet we can still make moral sense of our distant ancestors' actions. Moral life changes, but it also endures. Intriguingly, we seem much less agitated by praise for historical figures than by their condemnation—but both are forms of transhistorical moral judgement (Khaitan, 2017).

One useful way forward is to determine whether alternative moral views or choices were available to historical figures in their own lifetimes. As the philosopher Miranda Fricker puts it, “The proper standards by which to judge people are the best standards that were available to them at the time” (Edmonds, 2013). If alternative moral views weren't available, judgement is unwarranted—but, if plausible moral alternatives did exist, judgement may be reasonable. (Sheather, 2020, para. 6-7)

A similar argument is made by Harvard historian, David Armitage (no relation to the researcher of the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs), in his chapter “In Defense of Presentism” (Armitage, 2020).

It is the rare historian who asks herself what the discipline of history can contribute to human flourishing. How human beings can live more fulfilling lives; how they can best use their various capabilities; how they might achieve their own goals along with those of others: these are matters she might think are best left to her colleagues in philosophy, psychology, or even religion. Questions about human flourishing are fundamentally ethical but the contemporary discipline of history seems allergic to tackling moral matters. Historians almost never wonder, “to whom is the historian responsible and for what? And how are these values and this responsibility effective in historical work?” (Rüsen, 2004, p. 196)....

Historians also hardly ever consider how history might promote human flourishing, or do we debate whether some forms of historical work would advance it better than others. Least of all do we define the value of history according to that capacity. We are generally much more comfortable debating arguments from within our discipline, using our own professional tools, than we are stepping outside our consensus to ask whether the tools are the right one for the job, or even what the purpose of that job may be. *To do so would apparently threaten the prime purpose of history as a professional discipline: to reconstruct the past without the distorting effects of the present* [emphasis added]. Human flourishing, by contrast, is pursued in the present tense and directed towards our future: the past, and the study of the past, would seem to offer little help in this regard. Historians have certainly assumed so, with sometimes debilitating effects for the health and the public role of our discipline. (Armitage, 2020, p. 1-2)

Armitage (2020) argues to redefine the role of the historian as one who cannot stand idly by when questions of morality arise. The constant fear of historians—to be called anachronistic or a researcher suffering from presentism—comes at the expense of critical analysis from contemporary actors who claim the title of historian (Armitage, 2020).

Historians have not engaged seriously with philosophical presentism: in fact, they have not, as far as I can discover, ever engaged with it at all. This might be because there is some risk of confusing one family of presentism—the historians’—with another—the philosophers’—but I suspect the absence of interest reflects a broader unwillingness among historians to reflect on the ontological status of the past, and on our historical epistemology for gaining access to that past and then interpreting and explaining it within the present. Yet when philosophical presentism is stated so baldly across the disciplinary divide between philosophy and history, it challenges historians to be more explicit about our own philosophical commitments. How do we understand the nature of the object we study? Do we believe the past *qua* past exists? If so, in what sense might we understand its existence? Do we hold, with the novelist William Faulkner, that the past is never dead and that it is not even past? If so, then does it exist only in the present? Or does it exist simultaneously—perhaps even sequentially—in a present that is now past and a present that is now present but which is itself receding immediately into the past? If the historian believes the past does exist, does that mean that her *mèiter* is an “art of time travel” between present and past, as the Australian historian Tom Griffiths has put it? (Griffiths, 2016) or must we commit, along with Croce or a Collingwood, to a presentism that is both epistemological *and* ontological, the position that the past only exists in the present because it is only in the here and now that we have access to its existing objects, shards and fragments, broken echoes and murky memories, though they may be? In defense of this kind of presentism, I suggest that we should: otherwise, how are we to account for our ability to examine the past except as it exists in the present, through the incomplete evidence remaining from the shipwreck of history itself? (Armitage, 2020, p. 11)

The arguments presented by Sheather (2020) and Armitage (2020) empower the portraitist of Ann Fabe Isaacs to consider Isaacs, a 20th century actor, from a historian’s 21st century lens. Most clearly, without a 21st century actor, with an invested interest in the study of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the work of the historian would not have been taken up.

Naturally, the portraitist/historian of Isaacs brings the baggage of the present including the field of gifted education, to the fore of this work.

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs is just the second significant consideration of Isaacs' life and contributions—Rogers' 2014 chapter was the first. The portraitist hopes that additional research and analysis into the life of Isaacs will provide greater insights from new perspectives—whether those perspectives are new based on the period in which they are being considered and/or whether the newness arises from the likelihood that the next researcher will differ from the current researcher in terms of interests and unique lens. The specific identity and role of the researcher is considered in detail in the preface to the portrait at the end of chapter three.

Ultimately, the portraitist/historian of Ann Fabe Isaacs is confident in her ability to analyze, critique, and honor the memory of the founder of the NAGC and the *GCQ*. This confidence is tempered with the knowledge that the analysis provided here is supported by contemporary and historical context from the field of gifted education as well as the unique role of the researcher as instrument. The views held herein cannot speak for the entire field of gifted education, but the analysis should be considered for its role in helping contemporary audiences examine the history of the NAGC and the *GCQ* through the life and contributions of its founder, Ann Fabe Isaacs. Honoring both feminist biography and portraiture, the following discussion considers the holistic portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs—from a perspective of her historical context and that of the 21st century—recognizing the goodness and the flaws of the founder.

Echoes of the Past

Ann Fabe Isaacs' voice and contributions live on in the contemporary NAGC and the *GCQ*. She established the NAGC to support the needs of gifted children through research in the journal, resources for teachers, and parents, as well as support for gifted children themselves. This work always happened in the name of advocacy for gifted children. She participated in and encouraged advocacy at state, local, and national levels that was policy and practice focused. Isaacs used the journal to guide conversations on policy, best practices, and the needs of gifted children. Isaacs' desire to include all stakeholders—and forever invite more in—to support the needs of gifted children is reflected in the welcoming tone of the contemporary NAGC. The prestige and respectability of the *Quarterly* has only increased with each successive decade. The foundation Isaacs laid has maintained and supported the contemporary work of advocates and researchers and will continue to for the foreseeable future.

Isaacs' greatest legacy lies in what she left for contemporary advocates and researchers in gifted education and therefore what has been left for gifted children. The contemporary landscape of gifted education has numerous research-based practices that support teachers in classrooms, counselors in schools and private practice, parents, and advocates in their quest for greater resources and funding for gifted programming (Besnoy, 2005; Brulles & Brown, 2016; Burney & Sheldon, 2010; Gilman, 2008; Inman & Kirchner, 2016; Lanham, 2010; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Inman, 2009; Roberts & Siegle, 2012; Robinson & Moon, 2003; Rogers, 2002; Smutny, et al., 2016; Wiskow et

al., 2010; Wiskow et al., 2011). This would not have been possible without the state NAGC chapters and the research in the *GCQ*.

To fully appreciate Isaacs' contributions to the contemporary landscape of gifted education requires a close examination of her work with the organization and the journal. Further, a critical piece of educational history is the lens of the present. Isaacs' work requires both recognition and an examination for lessons learned that can be applied to contemporary and future advocates, researchers, and practitioners.

The National Association for Gifted Children: Then & Now

Remnants of Isaacs' tireless efforts are visible in 2022. The mission and vision of the organization have only a few discernable differences from 1954 to 2022. This bolsters the strength of the advocacy organization, as effective advocacy requires consistent and clear messaging (Roberts, 2014). Aside from the practical benefits of consistent messaging, the consistency of goals—lasting over 70 years—demonstrates the forward-thinking nature of Ann Fabe Isaacs. However, this also leads the researcher to wonder about stagnation in the field if the primary advocacy organization has not changed or needed to change very much in the past 70 years. This is an area of suggested future research that will be considered in more detail at the end of this chapter.

The NAGC maintains the annual conference that Isaacs started in 1957. However, the organization no longer needs to co-host it to support the cost and to increase attendance. The annual conference is a forum to share research-based best practices with teachers, counselors, researchers, parents, and advocates. Since Isaacs' tenure, the conferences have become much larger and more diverse in the presenters and presentation topics with

topics utilizing resources that would not have been fathomable in the 1950s, 60s, or 70s such as “Engaging Special Population Educators in a Virtual World” (Cress et al., 2021) and “Virtual Gifted Summer Enrichment Camps” (Phelps et al., 2021).

However, the primary focus of these annual meetings has remained the same—to share ideas and create connections to support gifted education (NAGC, 2022d). This event continues to expand the reach and knowledge of gifted education advocacy and best practices for gifted children. In 2022, the annual NAGC convention is touted as the “largest gathering devoted to gifted education and gain valuable information and inspiration through 230+ content rich sessions, networking, and keynote speakers” (NAGC, 2022d).

Isaacs’ desire to make the NAGC a clearinghouse has come to fruition through the multitude of free resources on the NAGC website even separate from print publications. Resources provide a scholarly basis for advocacy efforts whether those are taking place on behalf of a single student, dozens, hundreds, or thousands. NAGC continues Isaacs’ work of inclusion for all stakeholders in the work of supporting gifted children. However, this work often looks different in 2022 because of the recognition of the many special populations within gifted education.

Special populations require different advocacy requests and sometimes even different ways of asking for resources (Roberts, 2014). The increased attention on equitable identification practices and services as well as twice-exceptional children presents new challenges and opportunities for advocates of gifted education (Castellano & Frazier, 2011; Davis, 2014; Grantham, et al., 2005). In the case of twice-exceptional children,

Isaacs' desire to separate children with disabilities from the gifted has come to a head as twice-exceptional children fit into both the categories of gifted and living with a disability. The NAGC's increased focus on special populations and the discussion of a talent development paradigm are the primary departures from Isaacs' initial goals and purpose for the organization (Board of Directors, 2021; Krisel et al., 2015; NAGC, 2021d; NAGC, 2021h; Olszewski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012).

When considering Isaacs' overall purposes for the NAGC, published in 1957, the organization has not changed significantly in the past 70 years. The five guiding principles for the NAGC were as follows:

1. Stimulation of interest and research in gifted education including guidance, developmental, remedial, and preventative instruction related to education and training
2. Dissemination of scientific information regarding the gifted
3. Analysis of the problems of the gifted and dissemination of information about good practices in all phases of working with them
4. Provision of opportunities for classroom teachers to study about and improve methods of working with gifted learners
5. Publish and report scientific and experimental investigations as well as practices that result in improved methods for working with the gifted.

Isaacs achieved these goals several ways. The creation and dissemination of the *Gifted Child Quarterly* supported each of these goals, but specifically principles two,

four, and five. Despite lacking a background in research, Isaacs knew that research was the best way to identify the needs of and provide appropriate support for gifted children. While the journal supported principles one and three, Isaacs primarily used the journal to meet such goals. She made the existence of a “traveling book exhibit composed of current books and pamphlets on the literature, education and psychology of gifted children” known through the journal (Isaacs, 1958d). The only cost was postage—comparable to the free resources available through the NAGC website—the only cost is internet access. To ensure appropriate education and support for teachers of the gifted, provision four, the *Quarterly* frequently requested information about classes on the education of the gifted that were offered during summers and sometimes even the school year (Isaacs, 1961a). At a time when the field was only just beginning to provide coursework on education of the gifted, the NAGC was the consortium to find out about such classes to expand teachers’ repertoire for working with the gifted.

Isaacs seems to have achieved many of the goals she established for the NAGC and the *GCQ*, and her legacy is still felt in the current NAGC goals.

NAGC’s mission is to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children through education, advocacy, community building, and research. We aim to support parents and families; K-12 education professionals, including support service personnel; and members of the research and higher education community. (NAGC, 2021c, para. 1)

The foundation that Isaacs established for the NAGC ensured that the goals Isaacs established in 1954 would continue in perpetuity. Her goals were less focused on the research and higher education community, however Isaacs’ work helped establish such a

community. Advertising and calling for courses on the education of the gifted created a space for higher education to support the needs of gifted education.

Further, the role of Isaacs as an advocate is difficult to overstate. As early as 1960, she attended the White House Conference on Children and Youth to speak on behalf of the NAGC and the gifted education community (Isaacs, 1960a). Such efforts are still fostered through the NAGC's annual leadership and advocacy conference (NAGC, 2021e). In addition, by making information about the nature and needs of gifted children accessible to the masses, she stimulated key information for advocates to use when fighting for the cause of gifted children. This information was then used to stimulate the creation of local NAGC chapters that have become the contemporary voices for state advocacy on behalf of gifted children (CAGT, 2021). Ultimately, the contributions of Ann Fabe Isaacs likely made the contemporary goals of the NAGC not only possible, but successful.

The Gifted Child Quarterly: Then & Now

Isaacs recognized a lack of robust research in the field of gifted education and knew that those serving the gifted needed to have an established set of best practices. Isaacs identified best practices for gifted through her own experiences as a counselor, preschool teacher, and lifelong observations. She also read the works of Terman, Ward, and Hollingsworth as the leaders of the field. However, Isaacs realized that a strong and continuously updating research base was required to support gifted education as a field and to do what was best for gifted children. She established the *Quarterly* with the

primary goal of growing the research base on gifted children and the best practices to serve them.

The *Quarterly*, in its contemporary iteration, is a highly respected, peer-reviewed journal with a 2020 impact factor of 2.14 with a five-year impact factor of 3.564 (Clarivate Analytics, 2020a). The *Quarterly* provides a place for researchers to publish studies that guide practice. The journal was respected and impactful before Isaacs' tenure was over, but its importance, scope, and respectability has grown with each decade. Her time and devotion paid off for the field and for gifted children themselves.

While serving as editor of the *Quarterly*, Isaacs faced several challenges. Beyond the lack of pay for her time, and the lack of financial reserves for printing costs, the journal was frequently split between multiple audiences—parents, teachers, counselors, researchers, and advocates. While these individuals share many common goals, they do not all benefit from the same information presented in the same way. The NAGC now produces multiple publications for the different stakeholder audiences that are involved in the work of supporting gifted children. *Teaching for High Potential* and *Parenting for High Potential* provide research-based practices that apply to these very specific groups. This continues the tradition of providing education on gifted children for a range of interested parties, but in a more direct method—through multiple publications. While this is a departure from Isaacs' attempts to put everything in a single journal, it does promulgate her desire to have everyone involved in gifted education through the NAGC and its publications.

Isaacs' drive to establish the *Quarterly* as a resource for research-based best practices for gifted children has made the *GCQ* the respected publication that it is today. In contrast to the contemporary journal, which has many editorial voices in even a single year, let alone many years, Isaacs served as the editor in chief for nearly two decades. Thus, from 1957-1974, in many ways, the *Quarterly* reflected Isaacs beliefs and goals for the field. However, this was not without tempering from the academic community. Throughout her tenure, Isaacs had a strong and consistent editorial board—for over a decade—that provided the academic perspective for the journal.

Editorial Board

The editorial board, was for over a decade, comprised of E. Paul Torrance, and J.C. Gowan—leaders in the field of gifted education. Walter B. Barbe also served for nine years which strengthened the NAGC and the *GCQ*. In addition to publishing thoughtful research and editorial notes in the *Quarterly*, Torrance, Gowan, and Barbe were respected researchers in the field of education and psychology. Torrance published over 80 monographs, over 400 journal articles, and over 350 conference presentations, in addition to developing the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking which are considered one of the most valid and reliable ways to measure creativity (Kim, 2011).

Gowan, a working partner of Terman, also studied creativity and published over 100 articles and 14 books during his lifetime devoted to creativity and supporting gifted children. Barbe was the second president of the NAGC and a researcher and professor of education who published 11 books and over 200 journal articles on developing children's potential, learning styles, and the needs of gifted children. Torrance, Gowan, and Barbe

provided sound, research-based advice about assessments, classroom practices, therapeutic treatments, schoolwide interventions, and so much more.

Benjamin Fine served on the editorial board from 1961-1965 and is listed as “Education Editor, Newspaper Alliance of America” (Isaacs, 1964c). Fine also served as the education editor of the *New York Times* for 17 years, from 1941-1958—resigning to become dean of Yeshiva University’s Graduate School of Education (*New York Times*, 1975). Fine served as headmaster of the Sands Point Country Day School from 1962-1971 (*New York Times*, 1975). In 1972, the Sands Point Country Day School was sued by nine student families over fraud—claiming that the school did not live up to its promise to only accept gifted children having an IQ of at least 130 and to provide only the most rigorous education for such gifted children (Gonzalez, 1972; Silver, 1973). In 1971, Fine founded the Horizon School for Gifted Children where he served until 1974 (*New York Times*, 1975). After his death in 1975, Fine’s final book “The Stranglehold of the I.Q.” was published (*New York Times*, 1975).

Stanley Krippner joined the editorial board for the *Quarterly* in 1970 (Isaacs, 1970e) to work alongside Isaacs, Gowan and Torrance during the remainder of Isaacs’ time with the NAGC. At the time, his professional association was “Director Dream Analysis Laboratory Miamonides Hospital, Brooklyn, N.Y.” (Isaacs, 1970e). In addition to Krippner’s numerous published works in the *Quarterly*, throughout and beyond Isaacs’ time with the NAGC, Krippner is a preeminent researcher in consciousness, hypnosis, dissociation, and dreams (Krippner, n.d.). His publications are numerous and respected

across the field of psychology though his interest in the field of gifted education seems to have waned over time.

In 1971, A. Barbara Pilon joined the board and remained beyond Isaacs' departure in 1974 (Isaacs, 1971d). Pilon served Worcester State University for 22 years in both the education and literature department (Worcester State University, 2022). For over 15 years she presented sessions on poetry and language arts for gifted children as part of the University of Connecticut Confratute program (Worcester State University, 2022). In addition to her editing and writing for the *Quarterly*, she published dozens of articles on creativity in language arts and supporting gifted learners in English literature and authored several monographs (Worcester State University, 2022).

The small, but dedicated, group that worked with Isaacs to determine the content of the *Quarterly* had a robust record of experience and commitment to gifted education. However, working with such a small group—for such an extended period—undoubtedly limited the diversity of voices and ideas in the *Quarterly*. Isaacs' struggle to compromise may have been contributed to her less than willing nature when it came to expanding or changing the editorial board. And the final composition of the editorial board remained a far cry from the board that she originally proposed when she was building the *Quarterly*. The original conception of the board for the quarterly included Terman, Witty, and Passow among other leaders in the field (Jolly, 2018). The small group that surrounded Isaacs and the *Quarterly* may have stifled the expansion or introduction of new ideas.

Research Journal

Many of the articles published during Isaacs' tenure have fewer citations than contemporary articles. This is likely because of the fewer research studies available to cite during the 1960s and 1970s—they simply had not been done—as well as Isaacs' lack of a research background. Isaacs' welcomed the voices of many in the journal, not just researchers or researcher-practitioners. Despite the lack of citations in articles, and therefore a sense of less rigorous research, the articles selected for the *Quarterly* by Isaacs' and the editorial board largely align with contemporary best practices for gifted children.

A 1958 article by Morrow—a classroom teacher—discusses motivating gifted children, a topic of ongoing concern in the field which was the topic of the only special issue of the *Quarterly* in 2020 (Snyder & Wormington, 2020). Morrow (1958) describes a plan for supporting gifted children's motivation through home and school support—like the much more robust contemporary research on student motivation produced by contemporary scholars (Garn & Jolly, 2015; Siegle, et al., 2017).

A 1958 article by Rt. Rev. Elwell, a Superintendent of Schools and Diocese of Cleveland discusses acceleration utilizing many arguments that are verified and agreed upon within the field in 2022, “Enrichment is not enough for the really gifted child; that some controlled acceleration is also required...all too many bright pupils were dying on the vine because they found no challenge” (p. 21). Such a case is made and supported by a 2016 meta-analysis of acceleration research in the last 100 years which demonstrated its ability to significantly improve student achievement (Steenberg-Hu et al., 2016). “To ask

a ten year old fifth grader to read many additional books on the fifth grade level when his reading ability is that of a ninth or tenth grader, often leaves the bright child frustrated” (Elwell, 1958). Such arguments also reflect Gross’ canonical article, *Small Poppies*, about the needs of highly gifted young children (Gross, 1998).

Another article that would likely not appear in the contemporary *Quarterly*, was written by Isaacs herself—a series on Biblical Research (Isaacs, 1968a) aligned proverbs with universal truths about gifted children. Some of the information gleaned from Isaacs’ reading of religious texts included, “Well-intentioned educators have frequently misinterpreted the behavior of their gifted students” (96). This aligns with contemporary concerns about teachers’ misinterpretations of gifted student behavior including underachievement (Gottlieb, 2020), “problem behaviors,” (Zytka, 2020), and barriers to collaboration between gifted teachers and their general education counterparts (Mofield & Phelps, 2020).

Isaacs’ 1968 article also claimed that “Being gifted does not keep people from wanting to be like everyone else...The chosen people wanted to be like the other, ‘less chosen heathen nations.’” Such insight demonstrates Isaacs’ concern for gifted children’s proclivity for masking—a practice where gifted children try to hide their superior abilities to fit in socially (Gross, 2011). Masking is a well-documented phenomenon in the field of gifted education (Reis, 2002; Robinson, 2008; Ryan, 1999; Swiatek, 1995).

While these statements demonstrate the forward-thinking nature of Isaacs, this does not mean that all her ideas presented in the journal have withstood the test of time. In the same 1968 article, Isaacs argues, “Giftedness is the result of contact with a higher

power... [and]...The gifted are resented.” Such statements would be difficult—if not impossible—to measure and are far removed from the more scientific assertions made by authors in the *GCQ* in 2022.

Elwell (1958), Morrow (1958), and some of Isaacs’ articles, though lacking the rigorous research base of contemporary articles in the *GCQ*, demonstrate that their research-based practices, promoted by the NAGC through the *Quarterly* reflect what are now considered to be proven best practices to meet the needs of gifted children. These practices have only been further detailed and reinforced through the contemporary *Quarterly*.

Issues such as motivation, acceleration, underachievement, and creativity have remained critical to the field. However, additional areas of interest have become primary concerns for the field of gifted education likely because of the changing historical and social context of the past 70 years. Of note is the new emphasis on equitable identification and retention of children of color in gifted programs. In April 2022, the *Quarterly* published a special issue dedicated to equity in gifted education (Worrell & Dixson 2022). This aligns with the field’s newer focus on gifted children from marginalized communities, including those who are English Language Learners, children of color, twice exceptional, and/or children living in poverty.

One of Isaacs’ personal and public focuses for research and practice was creativity, specifically through the lens of E. Paul Torrance. Creativity was part of her personal and professional life. Creativity provided a crossover point for Isaacs who sought theory to support her personal experiences of practice. Torrance was a close friend who believed in

Ann and supported her work. He also benefitted from the dozens of published articles in the *Quarterly* throughout his lifetime.

The fact that Torrance was almost always the first published article, in every single issue of the *GCQ* that Isaacs edited speaks to their close relationship. The forward-thinking nature of Torrance's research lends respectability and a progressive tone to even the earliest issues of the *Quarterly*. Isaacs deeply respected Torrance's work and creativity as a theory and practice and that was evidenced through the journal.

To date, creativity remains a key topic within the field of gifted education (NAGC, n.d.-b). Creativity is a topic that is frequently discussed at the NAGC Annual Conference and published about frequently in the *GCQ* (Acar et al., 2021; Csermely, 2017; Kettler & Bower, 2017), as well as *THP* (Brigandi, 2020; Firmender, 2022; Hines & Sumners, 2021; Sumners & Hines, 2020; Xie, 2021). Creativity is the topic that most interested Isaacs personally that is also incredibly relevant to the field. The contemporary field of gifted education, however, has additional topics of significance that were absent from Isaacs' purview—this could have been due to the broader social and historical context of her lifetime or a result of her own perspective.

An area of research and practice that is particularly critical to the field of gifted education at large, including the NAGC and the *GCQ* is the issue of racial equity. The question of equity and its historical significance in the field was one of the compelling reasons for this study to be undertaken. The historical, social, and personal context of Isaacs' life likely would have made it truly unusual for her to be interested in racial equity for gifted education. Thus, she was representative of her lifetime in the ways that she did

not devote herself to equity work. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Isaacs was against the identification of gifted children of color, it was simply not an area of great focus for her likely because of the historical context of the time in which she lived.

An additional point of contrast between contemporary published topics in the *Quarterly* and topics considered during Isaacs' tenure is the matter of twice-exceptional children. It was not until the 1980s that scholars even recognized the existence of twice-exceptional children (Whitmore, 1981), let alone made it a singular topic of a research agenda. The introduction of the first federal policy for exceptional education, and the question of whether to include gifted children in such legislation was a significant focus of Isaacs' time with the NAGC. In the contemporary period, this debate is no longer seen as a case of either/or—twice-exceptional children are considered a special population within the field and an area of research interest (Hughes, 2011; Klinger, 2022; Maddocks, 2020; Park et al., 2018; Ritchotte & Zaghlawan, 2019). Thus, there is an increased fluidity to conversations about children who are gifted and children who have disabilities in 2022, an awareness and understanding of which was not developed while Isaacs was with the NAGC.

Ann Fabe Isaacs founded the NAGC, but possibly even more significant, she began an incredibly impactful journal to support research-based best practices for gifted children. The *Gifted Child Quarterly* continues to serve as a beacon in the field. Providing best practices for educators, researchers, and advocates brings Isaacs' dream for the journal to fruition.

Themes

The artifacts and interviews collected for this study were coded, using the pre-selected theoretical frameworks, for themes. In portraiture, themes are the resonant refrains that emerged frequently during data analysis. Initial themes were determined through the examination of artifacts and then confirmed by participant interviews. This added validity and authenticity to the studying—participants reinforced themes identified through analysis of the artifacts.

Identity and Intersectionality

Identity is the fabric that defines an individual's intersectionality. Intersectionality calls for an examination of the ways that privilege and oppression intersect to make unique lived experiences that cannot merely be defined by categories such as blackness or her status as a woman, alone (Crenshaw, 1991). For Isaacs, categories of identity provided both privilege and oppression. Further, the variability of certain categories—such as class—created additionally unique experiences of the world.

Gender

Ann's gender could have been a significant hindrance to her success as the founder of the NAGC and the *GCCQ*. Certainly, the responsibilities of mothering and being a wife took some time away from her work on behalf of gifted children. However, she could have been married to a husband who did not support her work, or she could have needed to earn money to support her family.

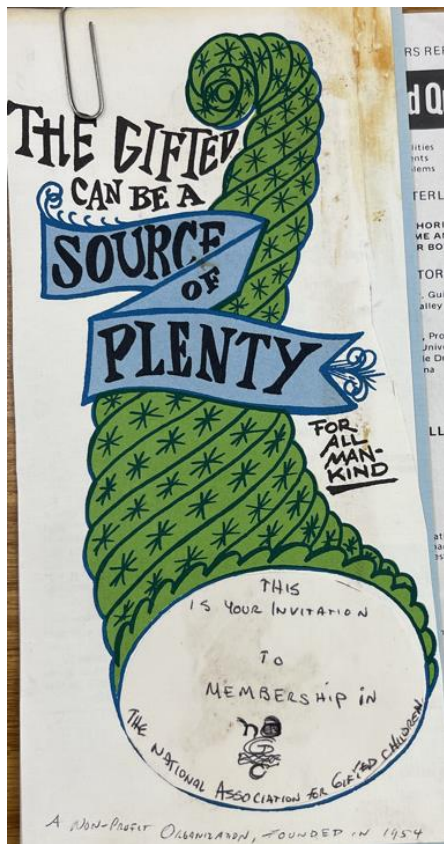
Fortunately for the field of gifted education, Ann seems to have used her identity as a woman to her advantage. With a financially and emotionally supportive husband,

Ann had the time and space to devote over 40 hours per week to the organization and the journal. She also had her daughters, Susan, and Marjorie to support the organization at home. Susan often answered the NAGC phone line—also the primary home line—and completed office work for the organization and the journal.

Ann worked from home so that she could still fulfill the duties of wife and mother, but it also enabled her to work at least 40 hours per week—at minimum—according to her daughters. Ann was never far from work which created a lack of boundaries—especially felt by her daughters, though the lack of boundaries allowed Ann to get the NAGC and the *GCQ* up and running and highly successful within a few years' time.

A woman, supported by her husband, had the time and energy to establish and run this organization because she did not require a salary or need to support her family financially. When men were expected to be sole providers for their families (Coltrane, 2004; Murphy, 2002; Wilkie, 1993), it would have been unfathomable to work without pay. Working full time without pay would have also been incredibly insulting for a man (Arnold & Brady, 2011). Ann sought a salary once the organization and journal were sustainable. However, she did the work required, without pay, likely because she knew the work that she did was worthwhile. Fortunately, Ann recognized the dire need to support gifted children. In this way, Ann took her less-privileged position, as a woman, and used it to her advantage—to give back tenfold.

Figure 26 Undated sketch demonstrating Ann's beliefs about gifted children (Isaacs, n.d.-h)



Note. Drawings such as this appeared in NAGC materials including the *Quarterly*

The theoretical framework of feminist biography supports the assumption that Isaacs is both remarkable and unremarkable—ahead of her time and firmly with it. She fulfilled the roles expected of her as a mother and wife. However, her daughters recall that most of Isaacs’ time was reserved for her professional life. Isaacs’ pushed herself and the NAGC forward because of her tireless commitment to advocacy for gifted children. However, Isaacs’ gender often came as a surprise to others. As a woman, Isaacs was never presumed to be the founder or head of an organization—demonstrated by the multitude of “Dear Sir(s)” letters that she received.

This presumption may have irked Isaacs, but it seems that the expectations of women were subverted by Isaacs to her advantage. While Isaacs was unpaid for her dauntless decades of work for the organization and the journal, privilege likely allowed her to work without pay. As a middle-class White woman, because her class and race influenced this too, Isaacs could work tirelessly, and without pay, for a cause that she believed in. Working without pay was not an option for most individuals, and typically not men, who were expected to support a family (Arnold & Brady, 2011; Coltrane, 2004; Murphy, 2002). While Isaacs' relationship with the organization began to feel challenging, it was also conducive to her lifestyle.

Middle to upper class women were expected to stay home and care for their children full time (Ellemers, 2018; Kaplan & Moore, 2011). Ann preferred to have the organization and journal stationed at her home. This way she could meet the expectation, at least outwardly, of the fully dedicated mother and wife while also fulfilling her need to give back to the world through the NAGC and the *GCO*. This created challenges as a mother, but Isaacs' time was well used for the betterment of many children, in addition to her own.

Race

Isaacs' experience of the racialized world was from a place of privilege. Even though she had spent her early years in a racially diverse, low-income neighborhood, she was uncomfortable around people of color. Further, during her adulthood, Isaacs' community of North Avondale rapidly became integrated shortly before the Isaacs moved to a much less racially diverse area—Amberly. There is no evidence to explain why the

move happened—Susan seemed to think it was a higher class neighborhood that her parents had aspired to live within.

There is only a small sample of evidence to construct Isaacs' racialized views. However, the first indication is an article, with no named author that is on the cover of the 1957 first issue of the *Quarterly*. Her recommendation for the use of blackface with gifted children, among other strategies, is upsetting to both the 2022 and 1957 sensibilities (Clark, 2021).

In addition, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that Ann referenced people of color or gifted children of color specifically as part of gifted education. And when children of color were referenced, their IQ score was also included (Isaacs, 1969d). This named the existence of gifted children of color, while also reinforcing the hegemony of the IQ test for identifying gifted children. Use of IQ tests as primary indicators of giftedness has been recognized as a practice that historically, and in the contemporary period, creates barriers to the identification of gifted children from underrepresented populations (Sternberg et al., 2021). Thus, there is very limited information about Isaacs' views on gifted children of color, but from a 2022 lens, they are challenging to reconcile.

Religion

Isaacs' relationship with Judaism changed over time. She was raised in a Jewish household with parents who saw their daughters' fulfillment of the American Dream through education. Isaacs married a Jewish husband who encouraged her to continue to pursue education and her dreams of making the world a better place for gifted children. While Jewishness and Giftedness were related interests throughout her life, it was not

until the mid-1960s that Isaacs began writing more about Judaism, as well as writing music for hymns, and pursuing a doctoral degree at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. In the 1970s, Isaacs began inserting more of her feelings around morality and Judaism into the *Quarterly*. This can be seen most obviously in Isaacs' identification tool for gifted children—it resembles the Star of David—which although it matches research-based identification tools in many ways, it fails to provide research-based support for her claims.

In addition to providing an area of research interest for Isaacs, Judaism provided grounding for her work. Isaacs' Personality Development Bureau and preschool clients self-identified as Jewish, as well as many of the child clients that she worked with. These individuals and children provided the initial impetus for Isaacs to establish the NAGC. Further, they provided community support for Isaacs' endeavors. Religion may have also provided significant indirect support to Isaacs.

The Jewish religion provides strong support for education (Wirth, 1943). Rabbi, the religious leader of Jewish individuals, translates to teacher. This support made the field of gifted education a place for women—despite the expectations for women to stay within the home. Education was encouraged for all Jewish people and was instilled in her from a young age by her parents and then reinforced by Isaacs' husband. Judaism's reverence for education gave Isaacs a space to appropriately assert herself, despite the expectations for married mothers in the mid-20th century.

Class

Isaacs' ability to be a nearly lifelong graduate student, and a full-time professional volunteer for the NAGC and the *GCQ* was possible likely because of her husband's support and her middle to upper class status. Isaacs could have devoted her entire life to her children and husband. However, she preferred to share her devotion to the organization and the journal, as well as her personal ongoing commitment to keep learning and growing. Isaacs could only organize and run the NAGC and the *GCQ* sans pay likely because she did not need to work for pay to support her family.

Although Isaacs did not appear to need a salary to run the organization and the journal, but she did desire to be paid by the organization for her tireless efforts. Isaacs wanted the recognition that a paycheck provided. She wanted to be seen by the people for whom the organization benefitted—not just the families, teachers, and counselors, who benefitted from her work, but the academics who were part of the board and frequently published in the journal. Ann recognized the importance of academics, but she never seemed to be recognized for them in the way that she had hoped to be—except for Torrance.

Creativity

Isaacs was a remarkably creative individual. She practiced both big and little C (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013) creativity. Creativity invigorated her and she felt strongly that it would have the same effect on everyone. Isaacs set hundreds of hymns to music, composed her own pieces, wrote short stories, made hundreds of sketches, and created a dozen canvas paintings. In addition to this type of Big C creativity, she felt creativity was

an essential part of daily lives, including her own. Especially later in life, Isaacs wrote short stories, sketched often, and looked for simple ways to increase creativity in her own life.

Throughout the archival and oral history data collection process, creativity emerged as a salient theme for Isaacs' life and therefore her portrait. At times, creativity appeared as a personal endeavor, but by the 1960s, it was a public force for Isaacs. After establishing a friendship with Torrance, creativity became a critical concern for Isaacs and therefore the NAGC and the *Quarterly*. Isaacs' deep belief in the power of creativity lasted her entire life. After being removed from the NAGC in 1974, according to Rogers (2014) and interviews with both of Isaacs' daughters, she went on to establish the NACCA and its corresponding journal. This organization was focused primarily on creativity and Isaacs' interest in the gifted-talented-creative individual. Ultimately, creativity is an essential theme to understanding Isaacs.

Ability

Ability and the related notion of disability were critical in Isaacs' life though in much less explicit ways than topics such as creativity and giftedness. Isaacs was remarkable in her ability to communicate, network, write, and advocate on behalf of gifted children. Her energy for this cause was truly astounding. However, likely because Isaacs experienced the world with such outstanding ability, she did not appear to frequently consider the experiences of those with disabilities. This would likely not have been a theme in Isaacs' life had she not been living and working during the passage of the first

federal legislation on the education of children with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The renewed emphasis on children with disabilities, as well as the new federal interest on gifted children—demonstrated through the 1958 National Defense of Education Act—meant that Isaacs could not be absent from federal debates over education. Children with disabilities and the gifted had been included together in the discussions of this new legislation (and were often lumped together in coursework on exceptional children as well (Isaacs, 1966a). Thus, Isaacs’ views on children with disabilities situate her work on behalf of gifted children in the middle of the 20th century to ground this portrait. Her views reflect the time in which she lived. She was not unique in this way. However, based on her position of power, her views were able to both influence and reflect the field of gifted education. The federal legislation passed on the education of children with disabilities did not include gifted children under the category of “exceptional education.” While Isaacs was not a sole speaker for the field of gifted education, her voice likely carried some weight.

Giftedness

The identity category that grounded the portrait of Isaacs was her giftedness. More than any other identity of category, this is what propelled her to greatness and influenced many choices in life. Subsequently, her other categories of identity informed the NAGC and the *GCQ* which would not have been founded were she not a gifted individual herself. Isaacs’ fear that other gifted people were like her—not noticed in school for their giftedness—and would fail to live up to their potential propelled her work forward daily.

Ironically, Isaacs was often interested in historical individuals who she saw giftedness in—outstanding individuals who clearly embodied giftedness. According to Marjorie (2021), her mother was fascinated by child prodigies. This may have been related to Isaacs’ own disappointment with her failure to be recognized as a child (Isaacs, 1994)—that her giftedness went unnoticed. She was clearly outstanding in so many ways—which led her to create the NAGC and the *GCQ*.

Intersectionality

Isaacs’ life demonstrates a unique individual who was simultaneously ahead of her time and a product of her time. She experienced the world primarily from a space of privilege. She was very capable—gifted, White, and middle class. The categories that held back Isaacs’ contemporaries from public work, namely her role as a wife and mother, propelled her forward. In addition, being a member of the Jewish community—a factor that could lead to discrimination based on antisemitism—instead provided a foundation for Isaacs’ work and a grounding for her belief system. Further, the Jewish impetus to educate all (Wirth, 1943), favored Isaacs’ personal desires to keep learning and improving the educational circumstances of gifted children.

The intersections of Ann Fabe Isaacs identity propelled her forward. Her giftedness, charisma, networking, race, class, gender, and religion got her where she wanted to go in life. Isaacs used her privilege to give back to the world by advocating for the needs of gifted children and building up the field of gifted education overall.

Boundaries: Feminist History and Feminist Biography

The frameworks of feminist history and feminist biography provided structure for crafting the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs. First, the portrait returns Isaacs to her rightful place of honor in the historical record. From there, Isaacs' categories of identity and lived experiences were considered for how they influenced her work with the NAGC. Archival and oral history data revealed themes that fit within some of the typical organizational frames of feminist history and feminist biography.

Public and Private

Ann Fabe Isaacs' public and private lives were almost one in the same—there was little separation between the two. Marjorie distinctly recalled a lack of boundaries—both physical and mental—between her mother's work and her home life. Isaacs' purposeful choice to have the headquarters of the NAGC in her home encouraged such a lack of separation. She was able to work, mother, and wife simultaneously. However, it seems that professional duties often took precedent over household chores.

The ongoing commitment that Isaacs made to the NAGC and the *GCQ* resulted in a shared familial commitment to keep this unpaid endeavor up and running. Ted Isaacs provided the financing for the extensive home office space, as well as the phone line that was used for both personal and professional business. Marjorie and Susan provided phone answering services as well as secretarial work to support their mother and the organization. This work was not optional and at times presented a burden for her daughters.

Isaacs' persistent commitment to the plight of gifted children required significant sacrifices on her part for very limited glory and never any pay. This information makes her commitment even more astounding. Isaacs felt compelled to do this work for the betterment of the future. She stood up for gifted children because she felt she had no other choice.

Contradictions

Ann Fabe Isaacs was a complicated individual with a complicated legacy. She established a critical organization and journal for the field of gifted education. She advocated tirelessly for gifted children and what she felt would best meet their needs. However, Isaacs also declined to advocate for federal funding for the gifted because of her strong beliefs about the inclusion of gifted children with exceptional education. She would not permit gifted children to be considered alongside children with disabilities (Isaacs, 1970f; Isaacs, 1972c). To date, aside from a federal grant program, there is no guaranteed funding for gifted education in the U.S. (Hafenstein, 2020). Further, Isaacs had to be removed from the NAGC so that the organization could grow to its present state.

Professionally, Isaacs was a collaborator and a networker. She had a strong group of close confidants—evidenced by her work with the same editorial board for over a decade. However, she struggled to get along with those she disagreed with—both those within and outside of the field. This likely did not make her an easy collaborator in many critical situations requiring the utmost cooperation. In addition, Isaacs struggled to maintain her composure when she had disagreements—evidenced by numerous articles, but especially

her 1970(f) article about funding gifted education under exceptional education as well as the tone and writing of her farewell address to the readers of the *GCQ* and members of the NAGC.

Isaacs' public writing provides another instance of her contradictions. Many times, Isaacs' writing was well-sourced and very academic in tone (Isaacs, 1957c, 1961a, 1962a, 1963a, 1963b, 1964a). However, other times her articles read like personal diary entries where she aired NAGC issues publicly and her explicit feelings about those issues (Isaacs, 1963c, 1965c, 1969d, 1971b, 1974d). In her final year with the organization, she published an 80-page book, "How to Teach Ourselves to be Good to One Another" within the journal (Isaacs, 1974d). This created challenges for members of the organization and leaves a challenge for those crafting her legacy—especially the NAGC itself. As the founder of the organization, the NAGC has a duty to honor and remember Isaacs, but her story is not one of all triumph. This adds to the challenge of naming and maintaining her legacy.

The ideals espoused by Isaacs also presented contradictions. In many cases, she emphasized the importance of I.Q. testing (Isaacs, 1966b; Isaacs, 1967b; Isaacs, 1969e) even giving the Stanford-Binet to her daughters annually. However, in some cases, she argued for non-test alternative especially for disadvantaged children (Isaacs, 1967b). This sounds like contemporary identification recommendations for equity in gifted education (Flynn & Shelton, 2022; Warne, 2022; Wells & Plucker, 2022). The gifted child paradigm of Isaacs' time with the NAGC relied upon the premise of I.Q. testing to

identify giftedness (Jolly, 2018). And yet, at times she could step out of this paradigm to advocate for the needs of gifted children.

Isaacs' complexities and contradictions add to the challenge of remembering Isaacs as a public and private figure. They also likely strain the memories of the professionals in the field—some of whom were acquainted with her during her lifetime. In some ways, Isaacs' work and legacy is one that the field can be incredibly proud of, but in other ways, she left much to be desired. However, the disappointments of Isaacs are a result of the examination of a 20th century individual with a 21st century lens. Thus, situating Isaacs within her historical context makes it easier to understand and appreciate her contributions. However, these challenges make it difficult to present a simple, neat, and unified front about the founder of this critical organization. The contemporary challenge of remembering and honoring Ann Fabe Isaacs by the NAGC is explored in greater detail in the discussion section of this chapter.

Themes from the Field of Gifted Education

The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs considers her life holistically—her public contributions as well as her private lived experiences. Her personal and public life both demonstrate lessons for the field of gifted education that can be used to inform contemporary practice and research. While Isaacs' unrestricted commitment to gifted education advocacy is not an option for many advocates today, it does provide helpful information for those in the field of gifted education.

Advocacy Broadly

Advocacy work can be exhausting and daunting though it never seemed that way for Isaacs. She appeared to have an endless supply of energy to expend on the future of gifted education. Her role as an advocate defined her public life. She founded the NAGC to support the needs of gifted children. The NAGC in turn provided a space for collaboration, support for educators, counselors, parents, and the gifted. Through travelling libraries, annual conventions, speaker series, and courses, the NAGC supported the needs of gifted children and those who served them. Only three years after starting the NAGC, Isaacs established the *GCQ* to disseminate research-based information on how to identify, serve, motivate, and enrich the gifted child. The journal also became a platform to share the work of state organizations and the ongoing foci of advocacy work within the field.

Isaacs' life was devoted to advocacy for gifted children. She saw every single person as a potential supporter of the NAGC. Isaacs wrote letters pleading for funds, legislation, and programming for gifted children. Likewise, she gave speeches, made phone calls, and taught courses herself on gifted education. Significantly, she ensured the dissemination of research-based information on gifted children through the *Quarterly*. These efforts created an organization that continues this purpose in 2022—to advocate for gifted children and disseminate critical information about how to support these unique individuals.

Advocacy for Special Populations

Isaacs' advocacy work for special populations of gifted children was checkered and typically reflected her own experiences of adversity. Utilizing a 21st century understanding of special populations from the field of gifted education, Isaacs paid most attention to low-income gifted children. She gave very limited consideration to gifted children with disabilities, who she considered to be incredibly rare (Isaacs, 1970f). These children were not widely recognized by the gifted education community until 1981 (Whitmore, 1981).

Ann also did not recognize the needs of English Language Learners or children of color that were not Black. Further, her considerations of Black gifted children were limited in scope. Some leaders of the field of gifted education—A. Henry Passow (1975) and Sidney Marland (1972)—did focus on the needs of underprivileged or “culturally different” gifted children. There is no clear answer as to why Isaacs was not as aware as her contemporaries. Isaacs was interested in higher incidences of Jewish gifted children (Adler 1963; 1964), but this did not translate to considering minority populations universally.

Low-Income Gifted Children

Throughout Isaacs' time with the NAGC, she occasionally advocated for children from low-income families (Isaacs, 1960d; Isaacs, 1961b). Isaacs had firsthand knowledge of poverty. Advocacy for special populations of gifted children—and the fight for equitable identification and retention of gifted children in low-income families has been robust and public during at least the past twenty years (Worrell & Dixson, 2018). From

Isaacs' view as a practitioner, she witnessed the ways in which many gifted children did not receive the services required for their success—especially children living in poverty.

As early as 1961, the NAGC had begun its Needy Gifted Book Project and shared it through the *Quarterly*. Ann described the program in this way (Isaacs, 1961b):

Early in the school year (October), the administrative offices of the schools are contacted and informed of the co-sponsored NAGC project which gives recognition to underprivileged gifted elementary school-age children. The plan is to present a book in the field of the child's interest and ability. Recommended book lists are available from the NAGC Headquarters Offices. Children selected are honored in a public assembly at the end of the year. Care is taken to order books specifically related to the children's interests and aspirations so that it is clear to them that the choice has not been a random one, but that someone cared enough to give considerable thought to them, their interests, and abilities. (Isaacs, p. 51)

Predictably, Ann focused on the group that she had once been part of—the low-income group. The NAGC Needy gifted book project continued throughout the 1960s which reflected the priority of low-income gifted children for Isaacs. She never seemed to question the existence of gifted children from low-income households. In Ann's Editorial Notes, she stated:

Gifted children from needy and underprivileged homes should be identified and followed throughout their school careers... Identification of these children and program provisions are inadequate, if constant follow up to help assure their continuous progress does not take place." (Isaacs, 1960d)

Thus, Ann recognized this special population, even if she did not necessarily have concrete ideas on the best practices to support them.

Isaacs' focus on "underprivileged" gifted children increased by the 1970s. In 1972, the *Quarterly* published an article with a section specifically related to underprivileged gifted children:

As shown by public concern for the underprivileged, the education fallout from social class, ethnic, and religious groupings is a problem under increasing consideration today. Individual talent among many young people is often submerged because of lack of opportunity and lack of recognition. Such skills and values as adroit as verbal inquiry, good use of formal English, delayed gratification, system-mindedness, and respect for authority are known to heighten school achievement. But these things are not usually transmitted in underprivileged families. The disadvantaged child who has not learned *how to learn* from adults is “motoric” more than reflective, and he probably has a sense of alienation from teachers because he cannot fit into school expectancies. There is considerable evidence that when giftedness is found in the lower-class child, it is likely to be manifested or discovered in those families who are upwardly mobile and who accept middle-class values. (Magary & Freehill, 1972, p. 190)

While this article was not written by Isaacs, it provides an example of the ideas she would approve about underprivileged gifted children. These statements seem to follow a stereotypical belief that children from underprivileged homes are raised with different values, morals, and behaviors that make it challenging to succeed in school. In 1973(a), Isaacs wrote to the board of the NAGC with the following request for consideration:

I just talked to Paul Torrance. He is going to write up a prospectus for us for a proposal to schedule workshops this summer for underprivileged gifted children. I consider this the most important thing NAGC could do. If we could be funded to concurrently sponsor twelve or so such workshops around the country, think of the exciting data we could collect and the extensive good we could do. I am suggesting the Board concentrate on this altogether and take care of the NAGC routine business as and if time permits—or even at a later date. (Isaacs, 1973a)

She was sharing this information with the Board, including Torrance, demonstrates that the field was focused and ready to discuss and work to understand and meet the needs of gifted children living in poverty. A similar remark was shared eight years earlier in a brief article in the *Quarterly* encouraging creativity for the preschool child with techniques that would likely not align with any contemporary research on creativity. According to Meeker (1965), “Let them be taught social techniques of middle class

values. This is, for underprivileged students at least, the direction which mobility will take” (p. 144).

An additional article in the *Quarterly*, published by Adler—the researcher also published in the *Quarterly* studying giftedness and Jewishness (Adler, 1963; 1964)—recognizes the nuances of class in gifted children’s opportunities in 1961.

Still another factor, often beyond the parents’ control, may be grinding poverty. It is a much observed phenomenon that many of the already classified gifted children have upper and middle class origins. It is not difficult to see that a child from an underprivileged home may lack the socio-economic and cultural advantages that his more fortunate brothers take for granted. This in itself may be a great block in the child’s path. Here we must ask ourselves how many youngsters are lost through our system of semi-selective education. One cannot but wonder how many youngsters are deprived of full development because of their environment. The problem of underachievement is, in all probability, quite great in youngsters from under-privileged backgrounds. To the bright child the effects of lack of opportunity may be quite frustrating. (Adler, 1961, p. 140)

The articles Isaacs chose to publish, as well as the programs she established, and her own writing on low-income gifted children make it clear that they were typically a consideration for her work. While some of the ideas published reinforced harmful stereotypes (Magary & Freehill, 1972; Meeker, 1965), this special population was being mentioned. Further, not all that was published on low-income gifted children was misleading or harmful (Adler, 1961; Isaacs, 1960d; Isaacs, 1970a; Isaacs, 1973a).

Meeting the needs of gifted children in poverty—through identification and programming—remains a critical issue and has been since the earliest years of the NAGC. In a 1970 letter to a New York school district, Ann said, “the gifted are to be found in all groups—perhaps even in the littlest financially able parts of your community” (Isaacs, 1970a).

Black Gifted Children

The complicated and painful history of Black and White race relations in the U.S. predates and goes far beyond the scope of this study. However, the Black/White dichotomy that prevailed throughout racial discourse in the latter half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century (Fernandez, 2007) must be recognized for the context of Ann Fabe Isaacs' life. Although contemporary definitions of special or underrepresented populations of gifted children include a multitude of races in "children of color," the primary racial group recognized in the U.S. during the first half of the 20th century was the Black community (Castellano & Frazier, 2021). Whiteness was a topic yet to be explored (Applebaum, 2016; Dyer, 2005). Thus, the only race-based special population for Isaacs to consider during her time with the NAGC was Black gifted children.

Isaacs occasionally recognized Black gifted children and the Black community in her work with the NAGC and the *GCQ*. Isaacs' good friend, E. Paul Torrance, frequently recognized race in gifted education (Torrance, 1964; Torrance, 1969; Torrance, 1971, Torrance, 1972b; Torrance, 1973; Torrance 1974). As race and education became a topic of national recognition in the 1950s, Isaacs included "culturally deprived" children in her thinking on gifted children. Isaacs' limited writings on Black gifted children make it difficult to draw conclusions about her broad racialized perspectives.

The opening article of the 1957 opening issue of the *Quarterly*, "How I teach Gifted Children," does not have a named author, though it does encourage the use of blackface when teaching gifted children (Anonymous, 1957). In 1965, Isaacs reprinted the

comments of gifted teenage panelists from the 12th Annual Meeting of the NAGC. This included a quote from one of the student panelists calling for racial unity (Isaacs, 1965b, p. 67). Two years later, Isaacs said in the *Quarterly*, “A concerted effort should be made to discover talent in underprivileged groups” (Isaacs, 1976c, p. 199). However, she does not name specifically who she is referring to as part of “underprivileged groups.”

There may be reason to believe Isaacs was referring to Black people because in the same 1976 editorial, Isaacs (1967c, p. 198) states:

The heritage of a good segment of our underprivileged population depicts them as a people responsive to both melody and rhythm. One has but to observe them casually sauntering down the street, or classroom aisle, to be able to sense an extraordinary rhythmic response which many of them seem to possess. Among performers, we have fine personalities which have risen from deprived groups, whose contributions have pleased many an audience. Further, the African heritage of some of these disadvantaged people abounds with a rhythm background.

From the lens of 2022, this appears to demonstrate a belief in the stereotypical representation of Black people as those who have a natural sense of rhythm and are natural performers. From Isaacs’ limited view of the world, she suggests that music would be one way to channel the energy and talents of such groups (Isaacs, 1976c).

In 1968, the *Quarterly* has an article dedicated to the fully integrated Lincoln School (Lynn, 1968) and one again two years later when it loses state funding (Gold, 1970). Like the “How I Teach Gifted Children” article from 1957, articles about the Lincoln School were not written by Isaacs, but they were published under her leadership as the editor.

In 1969, Isaacs shares an anecdote in the *Quarterly* about a Black five-year-old in the local Head Start program who has an IQ of 130 (Isaacs, 1969d). This anecdote is shared again in 1971 at the Annual NAGC Meeting and again in the journal that same year. Also

in 1971, Isaacs warns that schools have not provided properly for the gifted—listing multiple races including White—and that now such children are acting out because they were not properly treated in school (Isaacs, 1971a). The introduction of A. Barbara Pilon to the editorial board in 1971 seems to also have accompanied greater racial awareness for the *Quarterly* as she recommended book to specifically inspire confidence in Black children (Pilon, 1970). This coincided with the *Quarterly's* greater focus on race beginning in the late 1960s and into the 1970s (Bruch, 1971; Gold, 1970; Isaacs, 1971a; Joesting & Joesting, 1969; Pilon, 1970).

Gifted Children with Disabilities

In the very different historical and social context of the 21st century, many of Ann's words are challenging to read in the shadow of the disability rights movement and decades of changing views toward individuals with disabilities, let alone children. Her repeated use of the term “defective, retarded, and problem child” is particularly unsettling. However, this term and her rationale are indicative of her particular social and historical context. Despite the antiquated language, many of Ann's arguments would still be considered sound in the contemporary field of gifted education.

Ann's concerns about “a lack of provisions in actual practice is the result, when educators think of all exceptionalities in the same category” (Isaacs, 1966a) ring true. A classroom that includes all levels of students is going to provide fewer resources to all—especially those on the highest end of the spectrum who may appear to be fine when left to their own devices (Preckel, et al., 2019). Ann's concerns for the self-concept of the gifted, if they are included with children with disabilities, is reflected in concerns by

theorists in disability studies who worry about the impact of the disability label on those children (Lauchlan & Boyle, 2007). While Ann’s language was outdated, her ideas were far from it.

Research and Practice

Research and practice were both important to Isaacs and her work with the NAGC and the *GCCQ*. She realized the importance of both. Much of the advocacy work and practice for teachers, parents, and counselors came by way of the NAGC. The journal provided a space that was more closely focused upon research. In the earliest years of the *Quarterly*, there were fewer research-based pieces. However, by the 1960s, the journal was overwhelmingly printing research on gifted children. The enduring non-research-based pieces in the journal were typically from Isaacs herself. These essays included her editorials, themed pieces for the issue, and items written specifically for the consumption of gifted children.

Despite Isaacs’ production of non-research-based essays, on many occasions, she believed in the power of research. Her initial purpose for the journal was to provide information on studies of the gifted. This component of the journal is even more pronounced in 2022. Isaacs’ commitment to research has been retained in the NAGC too. Her democratic mission—to provide information on the gifted to all who wanted it—has been maintained through the multitude of free resources on the NAGC website, while the *Quarterly* is reserved for research of the highest standard. In this way, the contemporary NAGC reflects Isaacs’ own ideals and efforts. She did not want information about the gifted to be exclusionary, but she needed more venues than just the *Quarterly* to share the

right information with the right audience. The contemporary NAGC relies on their robust website, the *Quarterly* as well as *Teaching for High Potential* and *Parenting for High Potential*. The contemporary publications extend Isaacs' work.

Purpose of Gifted Education

The purpose of gifted education continues to be a critical question in the field (Cross et al., 2005; Dai & Chen, 2013; Plucker & Callahan, 2014; Renzulli, 2012). Isaacs felt strongly that gifted children would give back to the world through their superior ability and intelligence. She entrusted gifted children with securing world peace and curing cancer (Isaacs, 1962a) “We must never forget that problems yet awaiting solution—cancer, heart disease, mental illness, world peace will all be resolved through the efforts of some gifted child” (Isaacs, 1962a, p. 62). However, Isaacs knew that many did not recognize the importance of gifted children or realize their immense untapped potential. As a result, Isaacs dedicated her life to securing resources and recognition for these children.

Through practice and reading of the research, Isaacs knew that gifted children were prone to underachievement if special adjustments were not made to enhance their learning. Thus, she saw her work as two-fold—to raise awareness of the unique needs and great potential of gifted children and to identify and support the best practices and programming for these children. To accomplish these goals, Isaacs partnered with parents, teachers, researchers, school administrators, district leaders, and her fellow advocates. From her purpose, she knew that everyone could support gifted education for the ways in which gifted children would help the world. However, she also recognized

that the most frequent interested parties were those who were themselves gifted and/or worked with or had gifted children. Thus, Isaacs' audience for the NAGC was everyone who cared enough to listen.

The Gifted Child Paradigm

Isaacs' belief in the purpose of gifted education mirrored her focus on the paradigm of the gifted child—ushered in by Terman (1925) and continuing through the 1980s (Dai & Coleman, 2005). This conceptual framework requires a foundational belief that the gifted child is born, not made (Dai & Coleman, 2005). Isaacs believed that only some children are gifted and required specialized education to help them meet their full potential. Ann Fabe Isaacs' role as a multi-decade leader in the field of gifted education may have reinforced the belief and support for the gifted child paradigm.

The gifted child paradigm relied for decades on IQ-testing alone to identify children with varying degrees of giftedness (Dai & Coleman, 2005). This aligns with Isaacs' own practice of using IQ tests to determine giftedness, as well as the historical context of a lack of varied assessments to identify gifted children in the 20th century (Jolly, 2018). Thus, the lack of assessments, and Isaacs' firm belief in the ideals of the gifted child paradigm, and the validity of IQ testing could have reinforced the popularity and prevalence of the gifted child paradigm.

The overuse of IQ testing in gifted identification has been heavily critiqued in the field of gifted education today (Ford, 2004; Gagné, 2007; Gallagher, 1994; Olszewski-Kubilius & Corwith, 2017; Sternberg et al., 2021). The historical reliance on IQ testing—promoted and created by eugenicists such as Galton and Terman—has also been

connected to the contemporary inequities in gifted education (Sternberg et al., 2021). While there was no data to suggest that Isaacs was a eugenicist, her training in psychology in the 1940s would have predominantly focused on IQ tests—such as the Stanford-Binet. Isaacs had her daughters take the Stanford-Binet annually which likely represents her faith in such an assessment. Isaacs used and promoted the IQ test through the NAGC and the *Quarterly*. She frequently shared her anecdotal case studies with a reference to a child’s IQ (Isaacs, 1963e; Isaacs, 1969d; Isaacs, 1969e; Isaacs, 1971a; Isaacs, 1971c; Isaacs, n.d.-f). Her drawing of an NAGC logo even included “HI IQ” (Isaacs, n.d.-f), see figure 17. In this way, Isaacs represented the typical thinking of her time and likely reinforced the use of the IQ test to measure giftedness, because of her leadership role with the NAGC.

In contrast to the gifted child paradigm, the contemporary field considers the talent development paradigm as well. The talent development paradigm of gifted education officially emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s and in some ways was a response to over-reliance on IQ scores to label and identify gifted children (Olszewski-Kubilius & Thomson, 2015). The contemporary field of gifted education has an ongoing conversation concerning the gifted child and talent development paradigms (Dai & Chen, 2013). Such complex understandings of the field and foundational beliefs of gifted education were not required during Isaacs’ time at the NAGC.

Labelling Gifted Children

Isaacs recognized the purpose of gifted education as one of identifying and serving gifted children. This included ensuring that the gifted knew themselves—and that they

had special gifts and/or talents. By the 1960s, Isaacs seemed increasingly concerned that the gifted did not know who they were and that they did not know what it meant to be gifted. Isaacs believed this would result in the gifted not using their potential to give their gifts to the world—because they did not realize they had such potential. In a 1962(a) Editorial titled, “The Gifted Do Not Always Know Themselves,” Isaacs shares:

I have come to realize that the gifted do not always recognize these qualities in themselves. Heads of departments have shyly confessed they now know they must have been gifted children, and indeed perhaps are not making as much of their lives as they should in light of these new insights.” (p. 62)

This concern is reiterated in Isaacs’ 1969 letter to Renzulli, sharing her fears that the gifted do not know themselves and do not integrate giftedness into their self-concept. Recent studies also question the impact of labelling children as gifted (Berlin, 2009; Gates, 2010; Matthews et al., 2014; O’Connor, 2012).

Labelling gifted children was very important to Isaacs so that they may give their gifts to the world. This also supports the gifted child paradigm because gifted education is largely predicated on the pretense of identifying gifted children (Borland, 2005; Borland, 2018; Peters et al., 2014). Isaacs’ conviction that gifted children must know they are gifted seems likely to reflect her own dissatisfaction at having her great potential go unnoticed in K-12 schooling (Isaacs, 1994). The question of the importance of identifying and labelling gifted children emphasizes the oppositional paradigms of the gifted child versus talent development. Thus, Isaacs’ beliefs reflect her own experiences of not being identified as well as larger themes in the field.

Responses to Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the intersections of Ann Fabe Isaacs' identity and experiences that have shaped the National Association for Gifted Children?

Ann Fabe Isaacs' personal experiences and identity shaped the NAGC in its purpose, methods, and focus. The unique intersections of identity thrust her into the position of founding this organization with timely, yet forward-thinking goals. The unique experiences of Isaacs, as well as the unique context of her life created an ideal formula for a leader in the 20th century gifted education movement.

Identity

Isaacs' giftedness propelled her to greatness. She was intensely motivated to achieve her goals and used her creativity and remarkable abilities to meet this challenge head-on. Isaacs' giftedness was bolstered by her outgoing personality. She was courageously communicative on behalf of gifted children. No one was too prestigious to hear about the needs of gifted children. Isaacs' networking abilities likely contributed to her great success building the NAGC from the ground up. She contacted academics, publishers, community leaders, politicians, and foundations to support the organization and the journal.

Starting and growing the NAGC was a significant undertaking that required a major time commitment. In adulthood, Isaacs was a married, White, middle class, Jewish woman who had the time and space to devote herself to the organization. Support from a loving husband and daughters who were expected to be part of the team ensured that Isaacs' home office was a space for growth and productivity. There was a lack of

boundaries between Isaacs' public work and her home life. This reflects Isaacs' giftedness—her intense commitment to the NAGC despite a full life waiting for her just a few doors down the hall.

Isaacs' Jewishness opened doors alongside her giftedness. Throughout her career, Isaacs had support from the Jewish community for her work. Jewish neighbors sent their children to her preschool, Synagogue members utilized her psychological assessment services, and the Jewish community of Cincinnati provided an audience for her creative works that were shared publicly. Judaism also provided an appreciation of education which made a space for Isaacs' public work despite the expectations on a wife and mother. Her work with education was considered valuable and respected, though she had to balance it with her duties in the home.

The role of gender is critical to examining Isaacs' life. Isaacs was able to dedicate decades of her life to the needs of gifted children likely because her family did not rely on her income to support themselves. This gave Isaacs the time and flexibility to start and run the NAGC and the *GCQ*. Further, the support of a progressive husband lessened the household demands on Isaacs' time. Although Isaacs' gender seemed to provide privilege for her, it also created challenges—such as the assumption that she was a man running the organization. There is no evidence to suggest the ways in which such assumptions influenced Isaacs, but it likely was not unnoticed. Thus, gender was both a challenge and a privilege to Isaacs' public work.

Exceptional ability colored Isaacs' perspectives on children with disabilities. However, she was also influenced by a unique historical period—the precipice of the first

federal legislation about the schooling of children with disabilities. Isaacs' recognized that gifted children had been overlooked—often from the expense of concentrated attention on children with disabilities. The black and white thinking of children who were either gifted or had a disability prevented Isaacs from seeing the middle ground of twice-exceptional children. This was compounded by a lack of reliable assessments that analyzed holistically present the profile of a twice-exceptional child. Thus, Isaacs' own ability and the black and white thinking of the period when she served the NAGC seems to have prevented her from seeing twice-exceptional children and the ways in which gifted children could have benefitted from being under the umbrella of “exceptional education.”

Isaacs was in the unique position to influence the way in which gifted children were kept separate from children with disabilities in federal legislation. In contrast, Isaacs' views on race were reflective of the field of gifted education during the time in which she lived, and certainly from 1954-1974, when she led the NAGC and the *GCO*. Equitable identification and culturally responsive programming for gifted children was not a significant topic of interest for the field in the 1960s and 1970s. Isaacs learned from the field. Thus, it is not surprising that race was not a primary focus of the journal or the organization while Isaacs was at the helm. The NAGC reflected both Isaacs' experiences as well as the historical and cultural moment in which she lived.

Experiences

Creativity was, and continues to be, a significant area of interest for the field. As Isaacs learned from the field, she learned from Torrance, who was featured prominently

in the quarterly throughout her tenure. Torrance's research on creativity was promoted by Isaacs because it mirrored her own experiences of creativity. Isaacs was both Big and Little C creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). She saw her own experiences reflected in the work of Torrance and she used his research to continue her public work for education even after being removed from the NAGC—when she founded her next organization, the NACCA.

Creativity was a lifelong endeavor for Isaacs that informed theory and practice for her and the NAGC. In the beginning of Isaacs' career, when she founded and ran the Personality Development Preschool, she got her introduction to the challenges faced by gifted children. Isaacs' gave her students the Stanford-Binet and then proceeded to keep up with their experiences in school after leaving preschool. She was disappointed to find out that it seemed so many of the brightest students experienced the least success in school. This initial realization would connect with Isaacs' own experiences of schooling. A critical and grounding experience for Isaacs was her time in the K-12 educational system. In her Walnut Hills High School Alumni Information Form, it becomes clear that Isaacs was an overlooked gifted child who was not nurtured as she should have been. Isaacs felt that schooling nearly prevented her from living to her full potential and giving back to the world, as she believed all the gifted should. Experiencing the world as a self-identified gifted individual, who recognized how she had been overlooked undergird her passion for the NAGC.

Isaacs' experiences of being overlooked in school—not even playing in the band though she would later write hundreds of compositions—presented her worst fears for

other gifted individuals. Without proper nurturing, notice, and care, gifted children would fail to live up to their full potential and give back to the world. Isaacs' recognition of these schooling experiences led her to the tireless work of founding and growing the NAGC. Reflecting upon these experiences provided pivotal motivation for Isaacs' life work. Isaacs' lifelong experiences of creativity made it a natural topic for her work with the NAGC and the NACCA. These experiences generated the impetus and focus of her work with gifted children.

Research Question 2: How did Ann Fabe Isaacs negotiate multiple identities as an advocate for gifted education?

Ann Fabe Isaacs had to negotiate multiple identities throughout her time with the NAGC. Professionally, she was the founder of the NAGC, the first president, and then the Executive Director for the decades she served the organization. Within these roles, she founded the *Gifted Child Quarterly*, and served as its Editor in Chief until she was removed from the organization in 1974. These professional identities at times contested and reinforced her private roles of mother and wife. Ultimately, each of these roles required dedicated time and resources—all of which are finite. Isaacs had to make choices about where to spend her time and energy.

Isaacs could have advocated for gifted children as a concerned parent, a preschool teacher, a psychologist, or even as a gifted person herself. Instead, she advocated as a concerned citizen who believed that everyone should be concerned with the plight of gifted children. Arguing that gifted children could change the world with their gifts—if only provided the proper support and encouragement—was the platform upon which

Isaacs built the NAGC. She wanted everyone to recognize their role as a stakeholder in the education of gifted children.

Providing a broad platform that welcomed everyone into the fold of advocating for gifted children opened the door for everyone to get involved in the NAGC—for the betterment of the future and the world at large. Isaacs' foundation of NAGC was also uniquely situated to bridge positions that can often seem oppositional to one another—the realm of theory and practice. Isaacs began the NAGC with very little theory to inform her practice. She was largely working from her own experiences to guide best practices.

However, Isaacs was aware that theory should inform practice which is why she was tirelessly invested in the development of the *GCQ*, which was predicated with the goal of providing scientific information about gifted children and how to meet their needs. Despite lacking a doctorate-level background in research, Isaacs continuously took courses to improve her own understanding of the needs of gifted children. She also surrounded herself with researchers of gifted education. The Board of the NAGC and the *GCQ* was filled almost exclusively with academic researchers by 1960. Isaacs seemed drawn to researchers who confirmed what she had witnessed in her own practice. The research topic which most confirmed Isaacs' own experiences was creativity. Torrance always had a sounding board in Isaacs and the *GCQ*, as his ideas aligned with Isaacs and bolstered the respect of the journal.

The creativity Isaacs possessed was not the only component of her giftedness that influenced her advocacy work. Her remarkable networking abilities enabled the accomplishment of critical goals in terms of legislation, as well as even having a seat at

the table. Isaacs discussed the needs of gifted children and the NAGC with everyone she met. Further, she was unafraid to contact elected leaders and school district administrators to ensure gifted children were not overlooked. Isaacs' voice gave the NAGC a seat at the table as early as 1960 at the White House Conference on Education—only six years after the organization's founding and three years after the *Quarterly* was initially published. The sincere belief that gifted education was the concern of all, and the candor with which Isaacs approached this subject—with anyone who would listen—allowed the NAGC to grow and blossom into the robust organization that it is today.

The time and energy that Isaacs devoted to this work is difficult to measure. The success of the contemporary NAGC and *Quarterly* is one measure. The archives also provide a glimpse into the time and dedication Isaacs gave to the organization for two decades. Thousands of letters, memos, stories, speeches, essays, and presentations demonstrate her commitment. This commitment would not have been possible without the unqualified support of her husband, Ted Isaacs. Ted provided both financial and emotional support for Isaacs to devote nearly all her time and energy to the work of the organization. Ted Isaacs is a little-known blessing to the millions of individuals who benefit from the work of the NAGC today.

Isaacs was likely able to devote herself to advocating on behalf of gifted children because of her husband. However, she likely would not have even begun such work if the intensity of her giftedness had not compelled her to give back to the world in the same way that she hoped all gifted individuals would. Isaacs' outspoken nature ensured that the organization's messaging was consistent and ongoing. Further, she made gifted education

a platform that everyone could get on board with—not just the parents of gifted, teachers of gifted, or the gifted themselves. From Isaacs’ perspective, everyone could benefit from supporting gifted education and it is from this vantage point that she welcomed others in. Despite being a practitioner herself, she perpetually worked to increase her research skill base and to include experts in the organization. Early on, Isaacs recognized the relationship between theory and practice. Ultimately, this established an organization that was and continues to be inclusive, research-minded, and determined to provide the best for gifted children.

Research Question 3: How did Ann Fabe Isaacs’ intersectionality influence her work as an advocate for gifted education?

It is challenging to consider the influence of identity when each category is considered by itself. The task is even more difficult when considering the ways in which identity is manifested in lived experiences. Isaacs lived most of her life as a gifted, highly able, White, middle-class, Jewish, married, mother. These categories of identity created spaces of privilege—even those not typically considered categories of privilege—and allowed Isaacs to reach her full potential.

The intersections of Isaacs’ identity enabled her to do the critical unpaid work of running the NAGC and the *GCQ* while also informing how she did this work. Isaacs’ viewed giftedness through her own experiences and that is reflected in the organization and journal work during her tenure. Creativity was emphasized because it was part of her lived experience.

Jewishness was related to giftedness likely because Isaacs saw that reflected in her own community. Many of the children and families she worked with—who she identified as gifted—were Jewish themselves. The relationship between giftedness and Jewishness became a lifelong interest for her. For the case of all gifted children, Isaacs feared that the gifted would not know who they were, presumably because she had not been seen as full of potential during her K-12 schooling years, yet she so clearly was remarkable. Isaacs also feared that low-income gifted children would not be provided for, presumably because she herself had grown up in poverty. Finally, Isaacs did not see giftedness as something coexisting with a disability likely because that was so distant from the way in which she experienced the world and the way in which she had been trained to recognize giftedness. Ultimately, in many ways, Isaacs' created the NAGC and the *GCQ* in her own image.

The intersections of Isaacs' identity allowed her to do the work of running the NAGC and the *GCQ* and it also influenced her agenda for this work. The NAGC reflected Isaacs' deep commitment to the needs of gifted children as well as her world view and the historical context of her life. She had to make decisions about gifted children and those with a disability because of the time in which she lived. The precipice of federal legislation about exceptional education forced her opinion on this matter. Further, Isaacs had the privilege of working from home, without a salary for the NAGC, potentially because of her gender, class, and race, as well as the time in which she lived. Isaacs' unique historical context and intersectionality made it possible for her to do the critical work of founding the *NAGC* and the *GCQ*.

Research Question 4: How did Ann Fabe Isaacs’ employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education?

Perhaps Ann Fabe Isaacs greatest contribution to the field of gifted education is her legacy as an advocate—in ways the contemporary field would view in both a positive and negative light. She established the NAGC in 1954 and the *GCQ* in 1957 to advocate for gifted children—which serve the same purpose in 2022. Developing clear and consistent messaging—that argued for everyone’s role in supporting gifted education—sets a strong example for advocates today. Strong advocacy relies on collaboration. In some cases, Isaacs’ strength as a collaborator was clear—especially when it came to networking.

Networking ranged from neighbors and Synagogue members to state and federal elected officials, superintendents of school districts, university professors, and classroom teachers. No one was too prestigious for Isaacs to contact on behalf of gifted children. And no one was too humble and unassuming for Isaacs to include in the fold of the NAGC. Isaacs’ energy for the cause of gifted children spanned decades and her accomplishments are critical to the field of gifted education today—simply because she advocated for gifted children, and she refused to give up.

Isaacs’ networking skills were bolstered by a common message that she established for the organization. Consistency is key in advocacy messaging (Roberts, 2014; Wiskow et al., 2011). Isaacs—as the sole leader of the NAGC for two decades—was able to maintain her messaging. She never strayed from her belief that helping gifted children meant helping the world—because, as she believed, the gifted could share their gifts for the benefit of all (Isaacs, 1957a; Isaacs, 1957b; Isaacs, 1958a; Isaacs, 1958b; Isaacs,

1958c; Isaacs, 1962a; Isaacs, 1965a; Isaacs, 1966a; Isaacs, 1967a; Isaacs, 1967b; Isaacs, 1968a; Isaacs, 1969d; Isaacs, 1970c; Isaacs, 1970e; Isaacs, 1970f; Isaacs, 1971a; Isaacs, 1971b; Isaacs, 1972b; Isaacs, 1973b; Isaacs, 1974b). The contemporary NAGC without a consistent, singular, figurehead must contend with many voices when it comes to messaging. This results in a more complex and robust set of ideals for gifted education.

The complexities of advocacy emerge when considering the numerous stakeholders in gifted education. For Isaacs, the advocacy message was simple—all will benefit from the appropriate education for gifted children. She recognized the need for different educational resources based on the audience—teachers, researchers, psychologists, parents, and gifted children themselves. However, she did not separate her advocacy messaging into these categories. All stakeholders could share a unified vision of gifted education regardless of their experiences with it. In contrast, contemporary advocates frequently specialize their messages based on their role as a stakeholder and the unique experiences of each gifted child—whether the child is twice-exceptional, an English language learner, a student of color, and/or low-income (NAGC, 2021a; NAGC, 2021b; NAGC, 2021d; NAGC, 2021h).

Isaacs' work aligned most closely with the contemporary NAGC when considering her tireless efforts to advocate for state and federal legislation and funding for gifted education. Establishing and providing resources and support for state chapters of the NAGC (NAGC, 1959a; NAGC, 1963d) propelled much of this work. Further, publishing reports in the *GCO* of the state legislation for gifted children provided information for advocates across the country to learn and advocate for similar practices in their own

states. The combined strength of advocates across the country can be seen throughout Isaacs' time at the NAGC.

Isaacs' advocacy for federal policies on gifted education is more complex. She was successful in her endeavor to have gifted education kept separate from federal exceptional student education. While this was not a unified front in the field, as Isaacs demonstrated with her own expositions against the policy (1966a), she prevailed in her efforts. She attended the White House Conferences on Education, provided input when requested—and when not requested—for legislators, published about this issue in the *Quarterly*, and discussed it at public speaking engagements.

The consistency of Isaacs' messaging and her relentless efforts to get her beliefs to the ears of decision makers proved successful. In 2022, there is no federal legislation or funding for gifted education (Hafenstein, 2020). Isaacs' consistent and repeated messaging, and her astounding ability to network made her an ideal advocate for gifted education in the 20th century.

Implications

“We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are.” (Babylonian Talmud, Folio 55b)

This study sought to examine the life of Ann Fabe Isaacs, the founder of the NAGC. This examination reveals several implications that provide lessons for contemporary researchers, practitioners, and advocates. Most notably is the role of the self. Isaacs could not separate herself from anything that she did. She was the NAGC. She was the *GCQ*.

She also was her historical context which shaped the ways that she experienced her intersections of identity.

This lesson can help all who do public work on behalf of others. As the quote above suggests, the world cannot be viewed objectively, but is viewed from the lens of one's own experience. Thus, contemporary advocates, researchers, and practitioners must be cognizant of one's own blind spots—or experiences that are not familiar to the individuals themselves. One way to expand one's views is to recognize and encourage diverse voices. This was a challenge for Isaacs. Her thinking could be very inflexible at times which likely stifled the voices of those who did not agree with her and/or did not share her experiences. There are many lessons to be learned from Ann Fabe Isaacs. A critical lesson is to welcome all voices, even those that dissent with the majority and/or the leader. This is a key finding for both practitioners and researchers.

For Researchers

The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs reveals the ways in which individuals' lived experience, as well as historical context, influence leaders and therefore fields and movements. Thus, the importance of looking to individual experiences as well as the past cannot be overstated. If research is completely focused on the immediacy of an issue, then the unique context for such issues is overlooked. The historical context can shed light on causes and patterns of issues. This reveals foundations that can address the root of an issue or topic. Those who look backward can move forward with a better understanding of an issue.

In addition to considering the historical context as a critical piece of all research, the influence of historical leaders in the field of gifted education should not be overlooked. It is quite astounding to consider how closely the 1954 and 2022 NAGC resemble one another. This explains a lot about the field and how the field has both changed and remained the same. Considering the early leaders of the movement—researchers, teachers, and advocates helps to contextualize the field in 2022.

Isaacs' contextualized the field from her own experiences, including practice. She ran a neighborhood preschool, provided psychological testing services for families, consulted locally and nationally on the needs of gifted children for advocates, teachers, and counselors. Isaacs' multiple contextualized views of the needs of gifted children—and how to address these needs—likely contributed to the strength of the NAGC today as well as its welcoming tone. The contemporary NAGC is a place for everyone to work to support gifted children—teachers, parents, researchers, advocates, administrators, counselors, and legislators.

A final lesson provided by Isaacs' work with the NAGC is the need for flexibility from all those who work in the field of gifted education. In Isaacs' 1974 departure message in the *Quarterly*, it becomes clear that her inability to support gifted children under the label of exceptional children is likely what made it impossible for her to continue working with the Board of the NAGC. Had Isaacs been more flexible, she may have retained her position with NAGC. Further, she could have pushed for research—through the *Quarterly*—to understand the impact of gifted children being included under exceptional education.

Isaacs advocated for gifted children to be kept separate from “defective” and “handicapped” children presumably because of the time in which she lived. Had she been able to see beyond her time, she may have recognized the opportunity for federal funding under the label of exceptional education, and how paramount such funding could have been. However, Isaacs challenged the labelling of gifted children as anything other than gifts to the world that should be nurtured. This inflexibility, and her inability to win others in the field to her side prevented her from continuing to devote her life to the NAGC and the *GCQ*. Thus, inflexibility prevents compromise and keeps individuals out of a movement that can use all the tireless advocates that can be mustered.

For Practitioners

Isaacs’ portrait demonstrates the need to collaborate to include diverse voices in the field of gifted education. Personally, Isaacs struggled to make connections. This struggle was reflected in her professional life only when individuals disagreed with her. Thus, fewer voices were included in the NAGC and the *GCQ* during Isaacs’ tenure than there are today. This expansion of voices enriches the purview and goals of the NAGC in 2022. The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs also demonstrates the critical role of history when examining contemporary struggles. Contemporary advocates in New York state respond to criticism of gifted and talented programs to historically maintain segregation (Roda & Kafka, 2019).

In the case of the NAGC, despite being founded in the same year as the *Brown v. Board* decision, the claim that gifted education was begun to maintain segregation is unfounded. This study did not find any evidence to support that the NAGC—and its

subsequent advocacy efforts—had any intention of stemming White flight and/or disrupting school integration plans. Examining Isaacs’ life, the founder who left such an influence on the contemporary NAGC, demonstrates the lack of racial hostility when planning for gifted programming.

Further, such baseless claims of the racist history of gifted education fail to recognize the broader historical context of the 1950s—the time in which gifted programs became widespread in the U.S. The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs recognizes the critical role of historical context in shaping individuals’ choices. In addition to the *Brown* decision, the 1950s also included the launch of Sputnik and the 1958 National Defense of Education Act, which provided federal funding and recognition for gifted education. This newfound recognition and funding are critical to understanding the picture of the growth and promulgation of gifted programs in the U.S. When such historical context is not considered, baseless claims about the history of gifted education are more difficult to refute. Thus, practitioners must look to the broad scope of history to contextualize and respond to criticism of gifted education.

The historical lessons provided by Isaacs’ portrait also present hope for practitioners in the field of gifted education. Isaacs was primarily a practitioner. She dabbled in research and worked toward a doctoral degree, but she mostly worked from the perspective of someone with firsthand and secondhand knowledge of the lived experiences of gifted children—and presented such knowledge in the form of case studies. Isaacs surrounded herself and the organization with experts whom she could learn from. She also used her platform to share the research-based information that would

benefit practitioners and researchers alike. As the journal and organization grew more sophisticated and research-based, she never wavered on her commitment to supporting the individuals on the ground working to meet the needs of gifted children—teachers, counselors, parents, and advocates.

Isaacs' work as a practitioner and advocate reveals the increased strength of organizations that recognize the role of theory and practice. The collaborative nature of the NAGC is one of its greatest assets. The NAGC is not simply a place for advocates and practitioners or researchers. Each of these groups is brought together to learn and share from one another's experiences all in the hopes of providing the best for gifted children. This collaboration is astounding and provides a model from other organizations working to create change.

At the same time, practitioners—like researchers—must be careful to include a diverse group of voices. Isaacs struggled to maintain relationships with those who disagreed with her. Failing to include such voices limits the scope of the work for advocates and researchers. This creates a limited view that will not necessarily reflect the experiences of practitioners who do not have the luxury of excluding experiences they disagree with. Thus, while Isaacs was an outstanding force for good in the field of gifted education, her inability to compromise also stifled voices and experiences. While this helped maintain ideological cohesion, it created a much less vibrant, rich, and holistic picture of gifted education.

Discussion: History of Gifted Education and the NAGC

Not the least of the reasons the gifted child movement does not advance more rapidly is the lack of visibly gifted persons who devote themselves to the field. This does not

suggest that there is an actual dearth of gifted people working with the gifted. (Isaacs, 1971b, p. 298)

The picture of gifted education in the United States is limited by the dearth of recent research and researchers devoted to the subject—Jolly (2018, 2021; Jolly & Robins, 2018; Robins & Jolly, 2013; Robinson & Jolly, 2014) and Robinson (Jolly & Robinson, 2014; Robinson, 2018; Robinson, 2022; Robinson & Jolly, 2014; Robinson & Simonton, 2014) are notable exceptions. This examination of the founder of the NAGC begins to fill this void. This examination can also provide a reference to Isaacs' importance to help return her to the proper pride of place she deserves in the history of gifted education. Isaacs has largely been forgotten by historians of education and by the field of gifted education.

Notably, even the organization that Isaacs founded struggles to reconcile Ann Fabe Isaacs as part of their story. Until March 30, 2022, Ann Fabe Isaacs did not even warrant a page on the NAGC website. She was mentioned as the founder of the organization, with the list of Founders' Memorial Award recipients (NAGC, 2017), but nowhere else. The March 30, 2022, essay on Isaacs provides a very brief overview of Isaacs' life and contributions to the field (Robinson, 2022). In contrast to the historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs, Robinson's (2022) essay fails to seek the good. However, inclusion of Isaacs in the NAGC website is a new step in the right direction. Further, the mention of the archives where Isaacs' life work is housed provides interested readers with more information on how to dive deeply into the life and legacy of Isaacs.

Unfortunately, the brief article on Isaacs does not address one of the most critical findings of this study—the presumed connection between the growth of gifted

programming in the U.S. because of school integration. While Isaacs has been forgotten, the legacy of the founding of the NAGC in 1954 has not been. The archival data collection completed for this study makes this faulty correlation even more erroneous. Isaacs wrote the by-laws of the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952 (Figure 16)—two years before the *Brown v. Board* ruling. Although there is very limited information about this initial iteration of the NAGC, the by-laws speak for themselves. While the NAGC was founded in 1954, the idea of a gifted education organization for parents, teachers, and researchers was far from new in 1954.

The problem of practice this study addresses includes not only filling the gap on historical research in gifted education, but also providing accurate information for gifted education advocates to use against unfounded claims of a racist history of gifted education. A single artifact from Isaacs' archives undid multiple public claims of gifted education programming beginning in 1954 because of *Brown v. Board*. Isaacs founded the initial iteration of the NAGC, the Ohio Association for Gifted Children in 1952. This finding is critical to the field of researchers and advocates.

The contemporary NAGC and the *GCQ* has a special position and voice that can and is used to move the field of gifted education in new and exciting directions. Some of the historian's tasks are being undertaken by the NAGC itself through the Legacy Archive Project, conducted by the Conceptual Foundations Network (NAGC, n.d.-a).

The mission of the Legacy Archive Project is to create a video archive of leaders in the field of gifted education describing their significant contributions, how they arrived at those contributions, how they interpret the influence of their contributions on the field, and their thoughts about important future directions. (NAGC, n.d.-a, para. 2)

This work of the Legacy Archive Project is critical to developing primary sources for future historians of the field of gifted education. However, the collection of data does not fully encompass the responsibilities of the NAGC to the history of the field.

In 2019, the *Quarterly* sought manuscripts for a special issue related to the 100th anniversary of Terman's 1921 longitudinal study of gifted children (NAGC, n.d.-b). While much has already been written on Terman (Hegarty, 2007; Jolly, 2005b; Jolly, 2008; Leslie, 2000; Vialle, 1994; Warne, 2018; Winkler & Jolly, 2014)—one of the only topics in the history of gifted education that has been thoroughly considered—new perspectives on the influence of Terman in the 21st century provides an opportunity to look at the past to learn about the current state of the field. Instead of this special issue being released in 2021, the following statement was released from the Board of Directors (NAGC, 2021):

NAGC has taken steps to strengthen its commitment for equity and social justice. Lewis Terman's controversial views on race and eugenics are well known; a special issue of our academic journal on the anniversary of Terman's longitudinal study would not appropriately represent our organizational values. The special issue was cancelled due to its insensitive nature toward marginalized and disenfranchised people. However, in the spirit of academic freedom and editorial independence, the Board of Directors recognizes that the editors of the GCQ may elect to publish the individual articles originally selected for the special issue. To learn more, please see *Championing Equity and Social Justice for Black Students in Gifted Education: An Expanded vision for NAGC* <https://bit.ly/32o4ND4>. (NAGC Board of Directors, 2021, para. 2)

The *Quarterly's* single special issue dedicated to the history of gifted education was cancelled.

While this special issue could have demonstrated the ways in which the contemporary field of gifted education is a departure from Terman's racist views and

policies, the topic was instead sidestepped completely fearing that it would be an “implicit endorsement of the association by being the focus of a special issue” (NAGC Officers, 2020, para. 3). A 2018 *Quarterly* article on Terman both criticized his work and beliefs, while also gleaned insights that are helpful to present researchers and advocates (Warne, 2018). Thus, it is possible to present a complex view of a figure that is challenging to reconcile.

Analyzing challenging figures outright provides an opportunity for reconciliation—history should not be comfortable (Baumann et al., 2011; Shuster, 2018; Warner, 2012). Further, analyzing meaningful historical figures contributes to greater understanding of the field. Failing to speak to the history of gifted education—especially gaps that may provide an unsettling picture—makes an easier case against gifted education. This gap provides advocates with no reliable information to weaponize against claims of unquestionable and unqualified racism in the history of gifted education.

Assumptions about a wholly racist history of gifted education continue to remain contested when major authorities—such as the NAGC and the *Quarterly*—do not seek to spread the history of the field. The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs provides further confirmation that the role of the NAGC and the *GCQ* was not to defer racial integration or stem White flight. This organization was founded to support the needs of gifted children—the same goal it espouses in 2022. This portrait should bolster the NAGC’s confidence to move forward and assess its own history and encourage reflections of the past for its ability to situate and support efforts for the best possible future of gifted education.

Limitations

Limitations for this study include were primarily related to the nature of this study in its both historical and qualitative respects. Qualitative research is not generalizable (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Further, research that is biographical in nature is particularly not generalizable—as it focuses on a specific individual living in a specific time. However, the specificity of this portrait is also a strength, as portraiture seeks the universal in the specific (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Ann Fabe Isaacs was a unique person whose experiences will not have resonance for all, but many—especially those sharing a gendered experience—will likely find resonance in at least some parts of the portrait.

The nature of historical inquiry is time-bound. The use of archival data and oral history data enriches the portrait. However, oral history presents a challenge in terms of time. The researcher was very optimistic upon beginning this study—that many of Isaacs' colleagues would be alive and well, and eager to discuss Isaacs. Unfortunately, only Isaacs' most junior colleagues were still alive and well at the time of this study. Of these, none felt their relationship was close enough to answer the interview questions. The lack of collected oral history data from Isaacs' colleagues limits the perspectives in this study. Isaacs' daughters provided significant insights, but their view is limited. Likewise, archives provide a limited scope. There are missing voices in archival holdings and the perspectives can be one-sided. In defense of the daughter who donated the documents however, it did not appear that much had been censored or removed if

anything at all. The extensive holdings of the University of Cincinnati Archives also presented a challenge for this study.

The University of Cincinnati Archives only allowed ten boxes at a time to be brought to the reading room from their off-site archives. These boxes had to be requested months in advance and the researcher had only very limited information from the finding aids to determine which boxes to request. Thus, not all boxes, and subsequent archival data, in the Ann Fabe Isaacs collection at the University of Cincinnati were examined. All her published writing for the *Gifted Child Quarterly* and most of the correspondence and business information about the NAGC (determined using the University of Cincinnati finding aid) were considered for this study. An area for future research includes a return to the archives to examine every box, regardless of the dates and contents, to expand upon the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs.

Suggestions for Future Research

The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs raises many additional fascinating questions that are outside of the scope of this portrait. Initially, Isaacs' life is even so much more beyond her work with the NAGC. Continuing the research to craft a portrait or narrative of her entire life would shed even more light on this remarkable woman. In addition to continuing to understand the life of Isaacs' more completely, several areas for future research emerged to the researcher.

The history of gifted education is marginalized within the fields of gifted education and the history of education. The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs alone, will not fill this gaping hole. The field of gifted education would benefit from a historical analysis of

creativity, and other best practices over time—theorists, theories, practices, audiences, and the public’s perception of such information. Jolly’s (2016) exposition of the changing historical trajectory and contemporary use of Virgil S. Ward’s differentiation serves as an example of this critical work. Cultross, Jolly, and Winkler’s 2013 work completes a similar study on John Feldhusen and acceleration (Cultross et al., 2013). Further, with the ongoing debate concerning the place of gifted education in both the eyes of the federal government and in relation to special education, there should be historical inquiry on the contexts of legislative interest in gifted education—at federal and state levels.

The lack of historical inquiry into gifted education leaves a dearth of understanding about state gifted organizations, including NAGC chapters, as well as how different states developed and advocated for policies, funding, and programs. Such inquiries would yield beneficial lessons for contemporary advocates. Within these vast topics, there are stories to be told and insights to be gained to understand the contemporary state of gifted education in the United States. Considering state by state, the development of gifted programming would also help answer questions about the development of gifted programming both before, during, and after individual state and district desegregation plans went into effect. This information would support advocates that face calls to dismantle gifted programming because of its emergence during the era of desegregation—and therefore presumed racist undertones. This information would reveal even the accuracy of such a statement as to suggest a true timeline for the emergence of widespread gifted programming in the U.S.

While considering state by state developments of gifted programming, key figures would emerge—providing more individual and collective narratives to enrich the limited picture of gifted education in the U.S. Crafting the portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs revealed several individuals—researchers and practitioners who supported the establishment and success of the NAGC. Many of these individuals lack in-depth analyses of their contributions to their field. While the life and contributions of Torrance have been examined (Cramond, 2013; Grantham, 2013; Hebert, 2014; Hebert, et al., 2002; Kaufman & Baer, 2006; Kim, 2009; Neumeister & Cramond, 2004), individuals such as Barbe and Gowan have not been considered. Placing historical subjects in relation to one another and the context for their ideas would provide helpful grounding for analyses of the field in the last 100 years.

An additional suggestion for future research is an examination of possible stagnation in the field of gifted education. Jolly has begun to undertake this task (2005a, 2005b, 2009a), but it is work for more than a single researcher and single perspective. The *GCQ* and documents from the NAGC examined for this study, make clear the most critical topics in theory, practice, and advocacy for the field of gifted education. Many of the issues that Isaacs and her colleagues raised in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s are the same problems of 2022. Creativity, identification, effective programming, and underachievement continue to warrant intense focus for the field. In 2020, the second issue of the *GCQ* was dedicated to underachievement. The only significant additions to the field in recent years are a paradigm shift to talent development, recognition and research on twice-exceptional children, and a determination to make gifted education

more equitable. While these are significant issues, they only add to the long-standing list of tasks that the field of gifted education hopes to accomplish.

The lack of movement, on most critical issues to the field, provides an opportunity for researchers to complete a robust assessment of where the field has been and where it is now. Are all the tasks of gifted education the same? Where has success been achieved? What does success look like? A concerted effort, by experts on sub-topics within the field, to look both backwards and forward would inform best advocacy efforts for the future. Contemporary researchers' impetus to continue testing and validating assessments, curriculum, and practices is necessary work. However, recognizing the past allows such advances to be understood and applied in the context of the ongoing struggle to support gifted children. Historical context also legitimizes advocate arguments to improve ongoing concerns within the field that have not been addressed appropriately in decades.

The final area of suggested research involves the question of gender and educational leaders. The removal of Isaacs from the NAGC was precarious and leaves many questions that will likely go unanswered. Of particular interest is the role that gender played in her removal—was Isaacs considered an uncompromising woman who had too much power? This also relates to one of the foundational underpinnings for the purpose of this study—how Ann Fabe Isaacs has largely been forgotten by history. She is not remembered by the field of educational history and most egregiously, she has largely been forgotten by the contemporary NAGC—the organization that she founded from nothing.

In the spring of 2022, the NAGC website added some information about Ann Fabe Isaacs and her contributions to the organization. Aside from the inclusion of Isaacs' name on the Founders' Award, she has been absent from the NAGC website for decades. A woman who sacrificed time with her children, family, and the potential of a paycheck for her work elsewhere, has largely been forgotten by the field she nurtured and the organization she established. The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs serves to bridge the nearly two decades research gap on the founder of the most impactful gifted advocacy organization in the world. However, this gap does not begin to answer every question or determine every implication of Isaacs' role in the NAGC and the *GCQ*.

Isaacs' portrait challenges the claim that the NAGC and thereby gifted programming began in the U.S. because of school integration and to stem White flight. However, Isaacs' portrait cannot speak to the beginning of gifted programming in all places in the U.S. and it cannot reconcile the history of gifted education fully with claims of racist beginnings. Thus, it is up to researchers in the field to carry on the work of situating and understanding the conditions that encouraged the creation of gifted programs. In some cases, such programming may have racist undertones, but without research, such claims cannot be challenged or confirmed. This work would support advocates in the field who are tasked with answering questions about a history that has not yet been written.

A final area for researchers to consider is a wondering of this study—though not a focus—why are researchers disinterested in the history of the field? In 2021 when Rogers was presented with this question in the interview for this study, she shared:

I think we need a lot more research done on how we best meet the needs of these kids. We get a study here or there that looks promising, but then nobody replicates it. So, we need new research-based practices... We're far from knowing whether we're hitting the mark with those kids even to this day.

Such practice-based research work is certainly critical for the field. However, there is an even greater dearth of historical examination on many of the best practices which have been identified by the field during the last 50 years. Further, the challenges of not knowing history have become practical challenges for advocates of gifted education. When questions are unanswered, the gaps can be weaponized.

Examining the history of a movement—which has been accused of racism, and in some cases is true and in others it is unknown—can be a challenging task. Determining to examine the life of Ann Fabe Isaacs certainly came with personal qualms and wonderings. What if Isaacs was racist and did establish the NAGC to stem White flight? What if she did have harmful motives? What if the most important gifted organization in 2022 was also founded for the most abhorrent reasons? Answering these questions—whether the answer is exciting or disappointing—is critical to the health of the field and the work of contemporary advocates. The first step of reconciling a difficult history is to acknowledge such history (Shuster, 2018). Before acknowledgement of a harmful past can take place, the examination and publication of such information must be completed by thorough research.

This study is the beginning of the critical work of examining Isaacs' life in relation to the NAGC and the *GCQ*, but it is only a beginning and provides one researcher's perspective. The hope of this study is that it will encourage ongoing additional research about the forgotten members of the gifted education movement as well as the many

silences on the history of the field. Ultimately, this portrait is a beginning and must not be the end if a robust understanding of the field of gifted education is to be uncovered through severely needed historical analysis.

Chapter Summary

The portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs provides implications for the history of gifted education as well as the future of the NAGC and the *GCQ*. Examination of her life reveals the importance of collaboration with all stakeholders and messaging that unites individuals for the cause of gifted education. The historical consideration of Isaacs demonstrates the importance of examining historical context to develop a holistic understanding of events and actors in the field of gifted education. Finally, consideration of leaders in the gifted education movement benefits from a consideration of the intersections of their identity which influence their decisions, agenda, and methods of creating change.

The historical portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs provides lessons from the past that can be used to inform the future efforts of gifted education researchers, practitioners, and advocates. The portrait provides both guidance and caution for how to propel forward advocacy efforts on behalf of gifted children. Examination of Isaacs' life should encourage all supporters of the gifted to ask themselves how they can be more like Ann in their commitment to the cause of gifted children. To honor the work and wisdom of Ann Fabe Isaacs, this study closes with advice from her, found in a personal letter from 1990:

We just had a call from the U.S. Office of Education. They want to know what we know about identifying gifted-talented-creative children. It made me so sad, to think

our tax dollars are paying for this office which is at least 50 years behind the times. Again, they are inventing the wheel. Ah well, it is like the philosopher Santayana said: **THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW HISTORY ARE DOOMED TO REPEAT IT.** (Isaacs, 1990, para. 3)

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Appendices

Appendix A: Community Partner Agreement

Community Partner Agreement

Anna Armitage is completing her dissertation in practice for the Education Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in Gifted Education at the University of Denver under the supervision of Dr. Norma Hafenstein. The doctorate is part of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). A requirement of CPED is to work with a community partner to engage in practice as well as research. Community partners can attend the defense of the dissertation which will occur in spring 2022 for approximately two hours in length, although attendance is not required. Feedback from the community partner may result in required revisions based on the community partner's practical needs.

Community partner and Anna Armitage will meet twice: in the summer of 2021 and the winter of 2022 to discuss the dissertation research and output of the researcher on behalf of the community partner. The purpose of the study is to understand the life and legacy of Ann Fabe Isaacs—founder of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) and the first research journal for gifted education, the *Gifted Child Quarterly*. This study will be qualitative and descriptive in nature—using the lens of feminist/women's history to describe why Isaacs' founded the NAGC and the lasting impact she has left on the organization.

Rationale for the research topic:

- Lack of information on Ann Fabe Isaacs life and contributions
- Organizational founders' impact on policy, advocacy, and future directions for the field
- Gifted education is under attack by those who state it was founded to harm certain students and privilege others

The research questions for this study are:

- What are the intersections of Ann Fabe Isaacs' identity and experiences that have shaped the National Association for Gifted Children?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs negotiate multiple identities as founder and president of the National Association for Gifted Children?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' intersectionality influence her work as an advocate for gifted education?
- How did Ann Fabe Isaacs' employ advocacy strategies in support of gifted education?

Responsibilities of the Community Partner

- Contact possible oral history interview participants via email using provided researcher-created recruitment email
- Publicly share community partner-selected research findings and/or curricular resources digitally, on the Jacob Rader Marcus Center website
- Ensure permissions of archival materials allow for research and public dissemination
- Store oral history interview digital recording files and digital transcript files in perpetuity for the use of future researchers of Ann Fabe Isaacs

Community Partner	Date	Anna Armitage	Date
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Appendix B: Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Anna Armitage, and I am a Doctor of Education candidate in the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver. I am writing to invite you to participate in my doctoral research project, "Historical Portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs: Founder of the National Association for Gifted Children." This is a qualitative portraiture study about the life and legacy of Ann Fabe Isaacs particularly during the years of 1950-1975. You are eligible to be in this study because you knew Ann Fabe Isaacs during her lifetime or have completed research on her life since her death.

If you decide to participate in this study, I will come to a place of your choosing to interview you, or we can set a time to interview through an online method at a date and time that is convenient for you. I will ask you about Ann Fabe Isaacs contributions to the field of gifted education and what contemporary gifted advocates can learn from her. I will also ask questions about Ann Fabe Isaacs public and personal work, interests, and challenges. Finally, I will ask about how her personal and public context encouraged her own activism and impacted her agenda for the future of gifted education, research, and advocacy.

I expect to conduct one interview, with the possibility of a follow-up interview or follow-up communications to clarify answers to questions. The initial interview should last approximately one to two hours. A follow up interview would last less than one hour. Your audio and video will be recorded for transcription purposes. You will have a chance to modify or retract any parts of your interview or the transcript before this research is published. Your name and the information that you provide in the interview will be included in the transcripts and recordings which will be retained by the researcher until a suitable repository for the oral history interviews is found.

This is a completely voluntary research project. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please contact me at (727) 809-0180 or email me at anna.armitage@du.edu. You may also contact my faculty sponsor, Dr. Norma Hafenstein at (303) 871-2527 or by email at norma.hafenstein@du.edu. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

Anna L. Armitage M.A.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Interview Participant Consent Form

University of Denver
Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title of Research Study: Gifted Education Advocacy Lessons from the Past: A Historical Portrait of Ann Fabe Isaacs

Researcher: Anna Armitage, M.A., University of Denver, Doctor of Education Candidate

Study Site: Location of Participant's Choosing

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research is to collect oral history interviews on the life and legacy of Ann Fabe Isaacs. These interviews are intended to reveal historical lessons for contemporary advocates of gifted education.

Procedures

If you participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in one to two interviews that will not exceed two hours in length. These interviews will be audio recorded, and if conducted via Zoom or in-person, video recorded, for the purpose of transcription only.

Voluntary Participation

Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and/or stop the interview at any time. You may choose not to continue with the interviews, not answer a question, or not be recorded for any reason without penalty.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no perceived or potential risks for participating in this study. There may be discomfort associated with discussing Ann Fabe Isaacs, particularly considering that she is deceased.

You will be able to take a break at any time that you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed or you may terminate the interview at any time. Likewise, if the researcher observes that the interview appears to be troublesome, they will suggest that the interview be paused or terminated. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and is in no way an obligation of our relationship, if there is a relationship between the participant and researcher. You may, at any time, decline to answer any question without having to qualify a reason for doing so. You may, at any time, request a break, terminate the session, or remove yourself from this study, without any loss of benefit, and without having to qualify a reason for doing so. You may withdraw from the investigation with full confidence that any information that you have shared will not be included in the study. You will be given a copy of your interview transcripts for your records and if you decide to remain in this study, you will receive a copy of the research results.

Benefits

If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you, except the ability to share your voice about Ann Fabe Isaacs' life and legacy. However, the information in this study may provide insight into how to advocate for gifted education today.

Incentive to Participate

You will not receive any compensation for being in this study.

Confidentiality

Your name and information shared in the interview will not be confidential. For oral history interviews specifically, the role of context and identity is critical for shaping the examination. The interview will be recorded in an audio or video format and will be donated to an Archival or Special Collections repository for the use of future researchers. Before transcripts and audio/video files are provided for public research access, you will have the opportunity to modify or retract your statements in the transcript.

Questions

The researcher carrying out this study is Anna Armitage. You may contact her with any questions or concerns at (727) 809-0180 or email her at anna.armitage@du.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor of this research Dr. Norma Hafenstein at (303) 871-2527 or by email at norma.hafenstein@du.edu.

<u>Options for Participation</u>

Please initial your choice for the options below:

_____The researcher may video/audio record me for an in-person interview for this study.

_____The researcher may video/audio record me for an interview for this study via Zoom.

_____The researcher may audio record me for a phone interview for this study.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below.
You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

Participant Signature

Date

_____ Email _____ Phone _____

Participant Name Printed

Preferred Method of Contact

Preferred Phone Number

Preferred Email Address

Appendix D: Primary Source Interview Protocol

Statement for all Participants Before Beginning the Interview: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The intent of this research is to examine the life and legacy of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children in the period of 1950-1975. This examination will be rendered through a deep look into the life and legacy of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The questions below cover a range of topics that will help contemporary advocates learn from Isaacs' struggles and triumphs.

The following questions are intended to be open-ended to allow you to guide the conversation and provide as much information as you feel comfortable doing. There are no right or wrong answers. You can refuse to answer a question at any time, and you can also ask for clarification of a question at any time. Based on your answers, you may be asked follow-up questions so that the researcher can clarify her own understanding of your statements. If at any point you need to pause or stop the interview, you may. Based on your answers, you may be contacted for a follow up interview or clarifying questions.

You may also be contacted for the contact information of additional interview participants that you recommend—I will specifically ask for recommendations at the end of the interview. Once the interview has been completed, you can expect to receive the full transcript via email before any direct quotes are shared with others. At that time, you can clarify or revoke any statements from the official transcript. Before we begin, do you

have any questions for me?

1. What is your full name and date of birth?
2. Where were you born and what is your current location?

3. What was your relationship with Ann Fabe Isaacs?
4. Describe Isaacs' public life and work.
5. Describe Isaacs' home life and her work that was not as publicly visible.
6. How did Isaacs negotiate private home and public work life?
7. What was the impact of Isaacs' race, ethnicity, and religion on her public and private life?
8. What was the impact of Isaacs' gender and class on her public and private life?
9. Do you believe that Isaacs was identified or had self-identified as a gifted person?
Why/not?
10. Would you agree with that assessment? Why/not?
11. How did Isaacs define giftedness?
12. How were Isaacs' views of giftedness impacted by her own experiences?
13. Why did Isaacs establish the NAGC?
14. Why did Isaacs leave the NAGC?
15. What did Isaacs consider the advocacy priorities in gifted education?
16. How did Ann Fabe Isaacs advocate for gifted education?
17. Why did she advocate in the way that she did?
18. How did Isaacs rationalize the need for gifted education?
19. How did Isaacs advocate for students from underrepresented populations?
20. What challenges did Isaacs face as an advocate?
21. Where did Isaacs believe gifted policy should be located and/or led? National, state, or local?

22. Did Isaacs have any regrets in her advocacy work?
23. How successful did Isaacs feel, and do you believe she was, as an advocate for gifted education?
24. What were Isaacs main goals for gifted education and how/did those goals change over time?
25. Did Isaacs accomplish all that she hoped to with NAGC? Why/not?
26. How do you think Isaacs would want to have been remembered by the gifted education community?
27. If Isaacs were still alive, how would Isaacs feel about the NAGC today?
28. Are there any other questions or topics that you believe I should be asking about/focusing on?
29. Do you have anything else that you would like to add?
30. Is there anyone who you believe should be interviewed to be part of this study?

Appendix E: Secondary Source Interview Protocols

Statement for all Participants Before Beginning the Interview: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The intent of this research is to examine the life and legacy of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children in the period of 1950-1975. You have been invited to participate in this research because of your role as a researcher of Ann Fabe Isaacs. The questions will be focused on your work as a researcher of Isaacs' and the history of gifted education. The following questions are intended to be open-ended to allow you to guide the conversation and provide as much information as you feel comfortable doing. There are no right or wrong answers. You can refuse to answer a question at any time, and you can also ask for clarification of a question at any time. Based on your answers, you may be asked follow-up questions so that the researcher can clarify her own understanding of your statements. If at any point you need to pause or stop the interview, you may. Based on your answers, you may be contacted for a follow up interview or clarifying questions. You may also be contacted for the contact information of additional interview participants that you recommend—I will specifically ask for recommendations at the end of the interview. Once the interview has been completed, you can expect to receive the full transcript via email before any direct quotes are shared with others. At that time, you can clarify or revoke any statements from the official transcript. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

1. Why did you choose to study Ann Fabe Isaacs?
2. What was your experience conducting archival research for your study of Isaacs?

3. What do you believe are some of the most pressing questions about Isaacs?
4. What challenges did you encounter while studying Isaacs?

Appendix F: Revised Consent Form and Primary Source Interview Questions

Interview Participant Consent Form

University of Denver
Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title of Research Study: Gifted Education Advocacy Lessons from the Past: A Historical Portrait of Ann F. Isaacs

Researcher: Anna Armitage, M.A., University of Denver, Doctor of Education Candidate

Study Site: Location of Participant's Choosing

Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research is to collect oral history interviews on the life and legacy of Ann F. Isaacs. These interviews are intended to reveal historical lessons for contemporary advocates of gifted education.

Procedures

If you participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in one to two interviews that will not exceed two hours in length. These interviews will be audio-recorded, and if conducted via Zoom or in-person, video recorded, for the purpose of transcription only.

Voluntary Participation

Participating in this research study is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and/or stop the interview at any time. You may choose not to continue with the interviews, not answer a question, or not be recorded for any reason without penalty.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no perceived or potential risks for participating in this study. There may be discomfort associated with discussing Ann F. Isaacs, particularly considering that she is deceased.

You will be able to take a break at any time that you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed or you may terminate the interview at any time. Likewise, if the researcher observes that

the interview appears to be troublesome, they will suggest that the interview be paused or terminated. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and is in no way an obligation of our relationship, if there is a relationship between the participant and researcher. You may, at any time, decline to answer any question without having to qualify a reason for doing so. You may, at any time, request a break, terminate the session, or remove yourself from this study, without any loss of benefit, and without having to qualify a reason for doing so. You may withdraw from the investigation with full confidence that any information that you have shared will not be included in the study. You will be given a copy of your interview transcripts for your records and if you decide to remain in this study, you will receive a copy of the research results.

Benefits

If you agree to take part in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you, except the ability to share your voice about Ann F. Isaacs' life and legacy. However, the information in this study may provide insight into how to advocate for gifted education today.

Incentive to Participate

You will not receive any compensation for being in this study.

Confidentiality

Your name and information shared in the interview will not be confidential. For oral history interviews specifically, the role of context and identity is critical for shaping the examination. The interview will be recorded in an audio or video format and will be donated to an Archival or Special Collections repository for the use of future researchers. Before transcripts and audio/video files are provided for public research access, you will have the opportunity to modify or retract your statements in the transcript.

Questions

The researcher carrying out this study is Anna Armitage. You may contact her with any questions or concerns at (727) 809-0180 or email her at anna.armitage@du.edu. You may also contact the faculty sponsor of this research Dr. Norma Hafenstein at (303) 871-2527 or by email at norma.hafenstein@du.edu.

Options for Participation

Please initial your choice for the options below:

_____ The researcher may video/audio record me for an in-person interview for this study.

_____ The researcher may video/audio record me for an interview for this study via Zoom.

_____ The researcher may audio record me for a phone interview for this study.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records. **Recorded oral consent may also be given without completion of this form for participation, recording, and preferred contact information.**

Recording of participant for oral consent will only begin after participant has agreed to participate in the study and has approved recording of the interview.

Participant Signature _____
Date

Participant Name Printed _____
Preferred Method of Contact

Preferred Phone Number

Preferred Email Address

Appendix G: Primary Source Interview Protocol

Statement for all Participants Before Beginning the Interview: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study of Ann F. Isaacs. The intent of this research is to examine the life and legacy of the founder of the National Association for Gifted Children in the period of 1950-1975. This examination will be rendered through a deep look into the life and legacy of Ann F. Isaacs. The questions below cover a range of topics that will help contemporary advocates learn from Isaacs' struggles and triumphs.

The following questions are intended to be open-ended to allow you to guide the conversation and provide as much information as you feel comfortable doing. There are no right or wrong answers. You can refuse to answer a question at any time, and you can also ask for clarification of a question at any time. Based on your answers, you may be asked follow-up questions so that the researcher can clarify her own understanding of your statements. If at any point you need to pause or stop the interview, you may. Based on your answers, you may be contacted for a follow up interview or clarifying questions.

You may also be contacted for the contact information of additional interview participants that you recommend—I will specifically ask for recommendations at the end of the interview. Once the interview has been completed, you can expect to receive the full transcript via email before any direct quotes are shared with others. At that time, you can clarify or revoke any statements from the official transcript. Before we begin, do you

have any questions for me?

1. What is your full name and current age?
2. Where were you born and what is your current location?

3. What was your relationship with Ann F. Isaacs?
4. Describe Isaacs' public life and work.
5. Describe Isaacs' home life and work to the best of your knowledge.
6. Describe how Isaacs' identity impacted her work.
7. Describe Isaacs' views on giftedness towards herself and others.
8. Why and how did Isaacs start the National Association for Gifted Children?
9. Why and how did Isaacs start the *Gifted Child Quarterly*?
10. How and why did Isaacs leave the NAGC?
11. How did Isaacs advocate for gifted children?
12. What is your assessment of Isaacs' advocacy work for gifted education?
13. How do you think Isaacs should be remembered in the history of gifted education?
14. Is there anyone else that you believe should be contacted to take part in this study?

Appendix H: Image of Isaacs' Walnut Hills High School Alumni Form

Handwritten: Auto Bio

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS FOR ALUMNI OFFICE USE ONLY AND WILL NOT APPEAR IN THE DIRECTORY.

14-94

Prof. Ann Fabe Isaacs, C E O
The Nat. Assoc. for Creative Children and Adults

BIRTHDATE 7 / 2 / 20
MM DD YY

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION: Have lectured for more than 24 universities.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY ATTENDED	DEGREE RECEIVED
TRAINING AS A EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST:	
<u>U C,</u>	<u>B A</u>
<u>Xavier</u>	<u>M Ed</u>
<u>Western Reserve</u>	
<u>Univ. of Chicago</u>	
<u>Ohio State Univ.</u>	<u>Ph D work, Designated as</u>
	<u>Ph. D Eq by</u>

Musical training as a composer at: CCM, THE UNIV OF MI, THE HUUC
The Univ. of Michigan, and Eastman Sch. of Music, Univ. of Rochester

HOW DID WALNUT HILLS HIGH SCHOOL MOST IMPACT YOUR LIFE?

A WONDERFUL QUESTION, calling for a difficult answer from this writer. Academic preparation was so good, that practically the entire freshman year at college was a total loss. Better communication should have existed between W W H S and college(s) Always liked music but lacked confidence to try out for vocal or instrument

~~ALWAYS FELT DIFFERENT, SANS KNOWING IF THIS WAS DIFFERNT GOOD, OR DIFFERNT BAD.~~ As a child, quite shy, with many home responsibilities, H S achievement was not outstanding. Would love to help teachers and counselors become more aware of how to identify and nurture CREATIVITY in all students, that they too may reap the rewards of knowing they play a rote in a child's life who became a writer of 10 books, 500 published articles, 1,000 sketches, 36 oil paintings, and 200 musical compositions. NO ONE SEEMED TO ENVISION THIS POTENTIAL. I can only say, I wish some had. A little encouragement would have eased pains and to realize not all humans have the high level of self-initiating motivation and drive that reside in the writer. Many with high potential are lost to society, when home and school guidance are not as strong as they might be.

WZA

WZAQBC.1

