

Kilby was the boy next door

'Have you seen the well-put-together leaflet available at most Great Bend businesses entitled, "Who is Jack Kilby?"

Distributed by the Mayor's Committee to honor Jack Kilby with Allene Owen as chair, it tells Kilby's amazing genius that won this graduate of Great Bend High School the Nobel Peace Prize in physics, presented to him by His Majesty, the King of Sweden at the Stockholm Concert Hall in 2000.

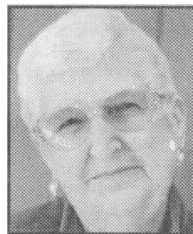
The leaflet quotes many notables of the various media praising Kilby's work. Perhaps the most important quote is from the Royal Swedish Academy of Science that said, "Without Kilby, it would not have been possible to build the personal computers we have today."

We Great Benders are understandably proud of one of our own who has gained such worldwide prominence.'

This event has made me ponder over several thoughts, such as, who were his teachers? Who encouraged that young mind to continue his education? Whose persuasion brought him to the love of this most difficult of subjects, physics?

And how many other graduates of GBHS have, in their own way, gone on to perform great things in their lives? ; ; The responsibility of teaching is awesome. Whether preschool, kindergarten, or 12 grade and college, the teachers of the world should be praised for the influences they wield over the younger

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generations.

Occasionally, as in any field of endeavor, one hears of a bad apple in the barrel, but I think back over my children's teachers, at Kinsley High, and at USD 428, and my own teachers at East Lane High in North Wembley, and can say in all honesty that we were all four served extremely well by the teachers and administrators in those schools.

We know, all too well, that parents are most responsible for the way the kids turn out, but the job of raising a child is shared by parents and teachers in equal measure. Hillary Clinton was scoffed by some when she said, "a village raises a child." But she was dead right. One of the people I interviewed in the Autograph series told me that she had been raised by the city of Medicine Lodge.

Bereft of parents, it was the citizens of that town who raised her, helped educate her and encouraged her all her

younger life.

You can read her story in the book, 101 Autographs of Barton County. Unfortunately, I lent my copy to someone that kept it and so can't tell you the page number — or really her name. Her last name, I believe was Pfaft and the last I heard of her was that she now lives in Lamed.

I tell you this, because I believe that all of us have a responsibility to the children of our community, whether we are parents or teachers or citizens of our town or city. Our influence does count. I'll bet if Jack Kilby could read this, he would agree.

Who are the people who have influenced you the most? It can be many; it can be only one or two. But whatever our memories, we can be sure that we were influenced by the day to day folk we saw, the clerk at the grocery store; the principal who welcomed us on our first day in a new school; the bully in grade school who stole our lunch sack; a helpful counselor at church and so on.

Jack Kilby will influence others too. He will help our kids to have more respect for school and teachers and he will show them that marvelous things can be accomplished **if** we have the will; to make it so.

(Marge Harrington is a guest columnist for the Great Bend (Kan.) Tribune. Sunday, Sept. 9, 2001.)