

## the great school legend

"Once again, this is a critical time in education. Today, children are enrolled in school earlier and attend for more years than at any other time or place in history. Demands on education have again reached an unprecedented peak, and have provoked new problems. But the so-called new set of problems is, in fact, a set of old problems, now insistent and uncompromising. They require that we finally take our traditional rhetoric seriously, instead of continuing to look to legends to explain why, in our time, the promise of our society is unfulfilled and seems destined to remain so."

"We must demythologize the schools and become much more aware of the tension which exists between the rhetorical goals of school and this society's clear willingness to encourage massive welfare dependency and poverty rather than do what is necessary to create autonomy and mobility. My firm belief is that in our environment built on a awareness of such tension, many more children will do well academically. Perhaps even more will do well in a framework of mutual respect and acceptance—of competition against self — rather than within the framework of hostility, suspicion, and incompleteness which presently dominates."

Colin Greer

**The Great School Legend, A Revisionist  
Interpretation of American Public Education**  
(New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972)