**School Challenges**

**Their achievements came later:   
1. Henry Winkler -- bottom 3 percent of high school class  
2. Thomas Watson Jr. (a CEO of IBM) -- took six years to finish high school  
3. Andy Griffith -- repeated 4th grade   
4. Nelson Rockefeller -- bottom third of high school class   
5. Charles Schulz -- failed all subjects in 8th grade  
6. Tom Monaghan (Domino’s Pizza) -- graduated last in his high school class. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Sir Winston Churchill took three years getting through eighth grade because he had trouble learning English. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker’s Sourcebook)***

**Harry “King” Cohn was a school dropout from New York who went west to plug songs. He eventually founded Columbia studios where his difficulties with the English language became famous. His own executives used to bet him he couldn’t spell the studio’s name and Cohn usually lost. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 12)***

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A surprising number of dropouts have made it into the top 400 of Forbes magazine. Bill Gates, the Microsoft whiz, left Harvard to tinker with software and developed the operating brain that is installed in nearly every personal computer. Kirk Kerkorian, a junior-high dropout and son of an American immigrant fruit farmer, made millions from Hollywood deals and Las Vegas properties and is now a major Chrysler stockholder. Ted Turner of Turner Broadcasting was booted from Brown University, although he later went back to graduate. *(Peter Lynch and John Rothchild, in Reader’s Digest)***

**What did Presidents William McKinley, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson have in common? Law school dropouts, all. *(L. M. Boyd)*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*  
Thomas Alva Edison was one of a fair number of geniuses who did poorly in school. (Einstein, Newton, and Pasteur were three others. In fact, Edison's mother, a school-teacher, was so offended with the bad reports young Ton was getting at school that she took him out of school altogether and taught him herself. *(Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 154)***

**Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of all time, while attending elementary school in Munich, Germany, maintained only average grades. *(Ripley's Believe It or Not: Book of Chance, p. 316)***

**They were expelled:   
Jackie Collins -- from high school  
Humphrey Bogart -- from Phillips Academy (Mass.)  
Chevy Chase -- from high school  
Joe Piscopo -- from high school eight times  
William Randolph Hearst -- from Harvard  
Marlon Brando -- from two high schools. *(World Feature Syndicate)***

**The richest American, Bill Gates, dropped out of Harvard to co-found Microsoft Corporation with Washington State University dropout Paul G. Allen. *(Paul Craig Roberts, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Cary Grant was expelled from school at age fourteen for sneaking into the girl’s room. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 91)***

**Actor, writer, director, and producer Michael Landon, an all around television wizard, wasn’t such a wiz academically. In his Collingwood, N.J., high school class, Landon reportedly graduated 300th out of a total of 301 students. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 57)***

**Long before George Lucas produced “Star Wars,” “The Empire Strikes Back,” and “The Return of the Jedi,” he made it through his last year at Modesto’s Downey High School with a D-plus grade average. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 236)*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**On September 28, 1785, Napoleon Bonaparte graduated from the Military Academy in Paris. He was 42nd in a class of only 51. *(The Daily Chronicle)***

**Napoleon finished near the bottom of his class at military school, yet became one of the leading military men of all time. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 138)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Edgar Allan Poe (class of 1834), short-story writer and poet, was thrown out of West Point. Expelled for “gross neglect of duty” and “disobedience of orders” on March 6, 1831). (P. S. H., in The Book of Lists, p. 36)**

**They had school problems:   
Boris Yeltsin -- expelled from high school   
Humphrey Bogart -- expelled from prep school   
Richard Pryor -- expelled from high school   
Erie Stanley Gardner -- expelled from high school   
Jack Benny -- expelled from high school. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
When he was a little boy the other children called him “Sparky,” after a comic-strip horse named Sparkplug. Sparky never did shake that nickname. School was all but impossible for Sparky. He failed every subject in the eighth grade. Every subject! He flunked physics in high school. Receiving a flat zero in the course, he distinguished himself as the worst physics student in his school’s history. He also flunked Latin. And Algebra. And English. He didn’t do much better in sports. Although he managed to make the school golf team, he promptly lost the only important match of the year. There was a consolation match. Sparky lost that too. Throughout his youth Sparky was awkward socially. He was not actually disliked by the other youngsters. No one cared that much. He was astonished if a classmate ever said hello to him outside school hours. No way to tell how he might have done at dating. In high school Sparky never once asked a girl out. He was too afraid of being turned down. Sparky was a loser. He, his classmates, everyone knew it. So he rolled with it. One something was important to Sparky: drawing. He was proud of his own artwork. Of course, no one else appreciated it. So you know what Sparky did? He wrote his autobiography in cartoons. He described his childhood self, the little boy loser, the chronic underachiever, in a cartoon character the whole world now knows. For the boy who failed the entire eighth grade, the young artist whose work was rejected not only by Walt Disney Studios but his own high high school yearbook, that young man was “Sparky” Charles Monroe Schulz. He created the “Peanuts” comic strip and the little cartoon boy whose kite would never fly -- Charlie Brown. *(Paul Aurandt)***

**Ted Turner, founder of CNN, always known for his “shoot from the hip” and dare-devil demeanor, was expelled from Brown University after he allowed a female guest into his dorm room against regulations. His expulsion didn’t stop him though. He later inherited his father’s Atlanta-based television station after his father tragically committed suicide. Turner went on to build the station into the CNN media empire that we know today. (Jim Romeo, in Business’ Most Wanted, p. 66)**

**Aviator Orville Wright was expelled for mischievous behavior from the Richmond, Indiana grammar school during the sixth grade in 1883.  
*(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 48)***

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