Patricia (Pat) Payne

H. Council Trenholm Memorial Award (Black)

A person who devotes a quarter century of their life in the service of education can be called a hero. A person who makes it her life’s mission for almost sixty years is a superhero. Patricia “Pat” Payne is a true superhero.

Pat Payne was a legend in the Indianapolis Public School (IPS) system for twenty-five years and proud member of the local Indianapolis Education Association, inspiring students and fellow educators alike. She then took her devotion to fostering an atmosphere where diversity was valued, by designing and directing the IPS Crispus Attucks Center. In concert with the city's Crispus Attucks Museum of African American History and IPS's Office of Multicultural Education, this institution creates an opportunity for and enables students of all backgrounds to know who they are, and appreciate other cultures.

Payne's well-earned retirement in 2014 turned into yet another scholastic rebirth, with the goal of combating educational imbalances. Pat remains an administrator on special assignment in the IPS system, currently the director of their Racial Equity Initiative. In this role, she works to eradicate biases and barriers that can hold back students of color. As founding president of the Indiana chapter of the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), she helps equip educators with the tools to create respect, tolerance and inclusion in the classroom.

Pat Payne has taken her message of inclusionary education to the multi-media and global world. She was the producer and host of the IPS-backed television show Multicultural Points and Perspectives, and has facilitated workshops with teachers from Botswana, South Africa to Fairbanks, Alaska and the Saskatchewan Province of Canada. Pat is a certified teacher for the REACH (Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage) program, and on a daily basis works to promote intersectionality and create healthy environments where children can learn and grow together.

To this day, Pat Payne consults school districts and organizations around the nation, always flying the flag of representation for all cultures and bringing communities together, as the key component for a quality education. Six decades of children have benefited from her expertise, compassion, and commitment, and will continue to do so.

In the words of the Inspirational music classic, when it comes to uplifting the youth via educational opportunity, Patricia Payne “ain’t tired yet”.