Dr. Emily Payne

Dr. Emily Miller Payne is one of our college’s leading women in the field of adult education, developmental education (DE), and literacy. As a treasured member of our faculty, we honor her long-lasting contributions and continue to recognize her legacy. Over the years, Dr. Payne has represented the minds and hearts of students through her dedicated teaching, service, scholarship, and leadership. She has been a staple in the community for over 30 years, having entered the field in 1971 as a TRIO Student Support Services program director. Since then, she has grown into a pillar of the Texas State University community, and served as an assistant professor, associate professor, and subsequently a tenured associate professor within the College of Education. Dr. Payne co-created and taught in our M.A. program in developmental and adult education and Ph.D. program in adult, professional, and community education (CALS). She then co-created our M.A., Ed.D., and Ph.D., programs in DE (CALA). She specialized in teaching graduate courses in qualitative research, developmental and adult literacy, program development, administration and management, policy and politics, and grant development. Over her career, she has served on 66 master theses and dissertation committees, having chaired 22 of them.

Dr. Payne created and served as director of The Education Institute since 2001, having secured millions of dollars with which to launch, develop, and improve numerous programs. The GREAT Center, the THECB Transition from Adult to DE Project, the Adult Education Credential Project, and the collaborative initiative to create a Professional Development Project. Additionally, she was the principle investigator for Texas Adult Literacy and Basic Education (LABE) Standards review and updating the Adult Basic Education Standards (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). She was the lead investigator for the Texas Education Content Standards and Benchmarks (TAECSBD), and aligned them with the Texas College & Career Readiness Standards (2013) and the Certification of High School Equivalency and the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSAIA).

Dr. Payne’s scholarly pursuits have focused on adult student transitions to postsecondary models, developmental and basic literacy instruction, and the impact of DE in professional development on instruction. She has published over 60 scholarly works in top journals within our field as well as various state and national facing policy makers and practitioners.

Examples of Dr. Payne’s many service endeavors include editor of the Journal of College Reading and Learning; co-founder and editorial advisor for the Journal of College Academic Support Services; faculty chair and advisor, and member of a plethora of senate, university, college, department, program, and search committees. She also serves as an advisor to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards, and has coordinated our DE reading program, supervising doctoral students teaching both co-requisite and traditional reading classes.

Dr. Payne was the recipient of the College Reading and Learning Association’s Karen G. Smith Special Recognition Award for Outstanding Service, the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education’s Administrator of the Year Award, and College Academic Support Programs’ Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Payne will retire in August 2020 after 32 years at Texas State University. She will be deeply missed for her unmatched wisdom, and the foundations she laid allowing our college and program to carry our venerable culture and tradition of excellence into the future.

Perhaps this sampling of student sentiments expresses our gratitude best:

Dr. Payne not only instilled a love of learning but a lifelong intellectual curiosity that has served me well personally and professionally. She made a huge impact in my career modeling what a professional looks like, and embedding it in practice.

—Mary Helen Martinez

Dr. Payne has been an indispensable part of my academic career... by encouraging me to explore my scholastic options and paths, recognizing and nurturing my professional strengths, and providing valuable feedback and support. She exemplified professionalism, tuteelage, and compassion. —Michael McConnell