



Laurence Jerome Payne

November 16, 1950 - November 26, 2023

Laurence J. Payne '73, a distinguished advocate for social justice, education, and community service, expired on Sunday, November 26, 2023, following a brave battle with Colon Cancer and a rare heart condition – Cardiac Amyloidosis. A beloved figure in Greater Houston, Larry was a passionate servant leader who dedicated 49 years to public service, education, not-for-profit, and religious leadership.

Larry was born in Orange, Texas, and his academic journey led him to the University of St. Thomas, where he earned a bachelor's degree in theology. He furthered his studies at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill, before serving the Catholic Church in lay positions. Larry made history as the first African American lay vicar in any Roman Catholic church in the U.S.

Throughout his career, Larry held influential positions, including President and CEO of Houston Habitat for Humanity, where he tripled home production and secured an endowment from Oprah Winfrey for the Angel Lane Subdivision, providing homes for Katrina families. His impact extended to the 18th and 25th Congressional Districts, where he served as District Director for Congressman Mickey Leland and Congressman Chris Bell, respectively.

Recognized for his transformative leadership, Larry received numerous awards, including the Knights of St. Peter Claver Justice Award, the Center for Houston's Future 2017 IMPACT Award, and the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong commitment to volunteer service in 2021. His dedication to UST was acknowledged with the Vincent J. Guinan, CSB, Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2007, the inaugural Laurence J. "Larry" Payne Servant Leadership Award in 2021 and the James Byrd, Jr. Change Makers Award from the Coalition Against Hate 2023.

Larry leaves a legacy of goodness, discipline, knowledge, and community service. His impact on education, social justice, and community development will be remembered fondly. Larry is survived by his loving wife Regina, ; his devoted brother, Melvin Payne (Beverly); his aunts, Alma Collins Thibodeaux (Orange, TX), Ann Collins (Orinda, CA), Adelene Roy and Pauline Butler Drake; nieces and nephews, Hazel Williams, Jordan Roberson, William Goodson and Harold C. Goodson; sister-in-law, Barbara Goodson (Wildomar, CA); God Daughters, Dominique Guillory (New York City), and Ava Rae Sherrod (Waldorf, MD) - and his active involvement in St. Theresa Catholic Church. May he rest in peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire future generations.

Should friends desire to make a Memorial Gift, Remembering Larry,

they may be sent to the following:

University of St. Thomas – Office of the President, Cindy Viaud

3800 Montrose Boulevard – Houston, Texas 77006

Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston – Chief Development Officer, Maria F. Magee

3303 Main Street – Houston, Texas 77002

Tribute Wall

JJ

“ Jose R. Perez Jr lit a candle It was my honor to know Larry- he was a worldclass human being who touched many by his kindness and intelligence. We'll miss you Larry- God Bless, Joe.



Jose R. Perez Jr - December 05, 2023 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ Shawn Rodgers lit a candle On behalf of our entire team, please accept our deepest sympathies. Mr. Payne will forever be one of our favorite patients. Uptown Park Dental



Shawn Rodgers - December 04, 2023 at 12:00 AM

CH

“ Carolyn Tatum Horne lit a candle Heartfelt Condolences to Regina, Melvin, and the Extended Family of LJP.
Larry was truly the epitome of a Servant Leader; His presence uplifted all whom He came in contact with.
I will always remember his help in navigating an Educational roadblock for my daughter who was a student in HISD many years ago when He was CEO of the Greater Houston Educational Excellence Coalition. His assistance was invaluable. We will always remember His kindness and concern in this matter.
Rest well My Friend, Rest in Peace, Rest in Love! Carolyn Tatum Horne



Carolyn Tatum Horne - December 04, 2023 at 12:00 AM

AN

“ Anne lit a candle Deepest condolences to Larry's family, and sincere gratitude and appreciation for the wonderful and selfless work Larry invested in us all. May our Almighty Father rest his authentically caring soul in eternal peace and joy of His Heavenly Kingdom, we pray through Christ Jesus our Redeemer Lord, Amen. Anne.



Anne - December 01, 2023 at 12:00 AM

TT

“ Prayers with and for all of Larry's family. Continue to trust and lean on HIM as you always have.

The Sparrow Family, Orange, Texas - November 29, 2023 at 06:53 PM