



Pacific Beach Town Council

1706 Garnet Ave, San Diego, CA 92109

(858) 483-6666 | pbtowncouncil.org

July 8, 2020

To: San Diego City Councilmembers
City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Board

Cc: San Diego Unified School District

Re: **Renaming PB Community Park “Fannie and William Payne Community Park”**

Dear City Councilmembers et al,

Our Pacific Beach Town Council supports the effort to rename the Pacific Beach Middle Joint Use Field as the “Fannie and William Payne Community Park” to honor their lives, legacies, and the lessons learned from their story. Their strength is worthy of commemoration and we support the efforts of local residents Paige Hernandez and Regina Sinsky-Crosby to do so in a meaningful way.

Fannie and William Payne were both pioneering teachers who dedicated their lives to education. Fannie earned a master’s degree from SDSU in 1964, and after a 36-year career as a teacher and guidance counselor at San Diego schools, she retired from teaching in 1979. Mrs. Payne went on to receive numerous honors for her notable community service including a “Woman of Dedication” recognition by the Salvation Army. She died in 2008.

With a degree from the Sorbonne University in Paris and having taught at the Tuskegee Institute, William Payne became the second Black educator hired by the San Diego Unified School District in 1945. He was assigned to Pacific Beach Junior High where he nobly and effectively educated young middle school students. In a display of demoralizing racism during this time, a group of petitioners had the audacity to advocate for his reassignment to another school.

When presented with the petition of 1900 signatures for Payne's reassignment at a school board meeting, the Superintendent of Schools, at the time, stood firm and the petitioners were rightfully denied. Payne later went on to teach at San Diego High where he finished out his distinguished 25-year career in public schools. He died in 1986.

Having endured heart-wrenching racism and unconscionable pushback from petitioners in 1945, Fannie and William Payne rose above it all and lived out exemplary lives worthy of acknowledgement in Pacific Beach and beyond. Their lives remain an illustration of honor, integrity, and resilience, and we, the PBTC, fully support their commemoration and remembrance in the renaming of this park next to P.B. Middle School. As city councilmembers, we hope you will support this effort too.

Sincerely,



Brian White
President, Board of Directors
Pacific Beach Town Council
pbtowncouncil.org