

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

FERNANDUS PAYNE

(February 13, 1881--October 13, 1977)

Good teaching and research thrive best in a scholarly atmosphere, one of freedom, one in which it is respectable to pursue knowledge for the sake of knowledge as well as for practical results.... Such an atmosphere...comes about because men believe in it, work for it, foster and nourish it, live it.... If I could live my life over again, I would choose a life of teaching and research. My life has been an interesting and busy one, not monotonous. In stepping aside, I do so with perfect confidence in you who are to carry on, but I charge you never to lose sight of the high ideals for which we have worked, recognizing, however, that an ideal is nothing more than a banner on a mountain top and is of little avail if you merely sit at the base and gaze at it.

These comments, delivered by Fernandus Payne on the occasion of his retirement (1948) as Dean of the Graduate School (1947) and head of the Department of Zoology (1948) reflect the philosophy and spirit of a man who served Indiana University for almost fifty years. For those of us who were privileged to know him, the "stepping aside" has meant his retirement from research in 1971 and his passing October 13, 1977, in Frankfort, Indiana, at the age of 96: the end of a career as an internationally recognized scientist, a stubborn champion of academic freedom and excellence, and a dedicated teacher and administrator.

Fernandus Payne was born in a log cabin near Shelbyville, Indiana. He entered IU as a student in 1902 and in 1905 received the A.B. degree. After two years as a laboratory assistant, he accepted a scholarship to Columbia University where he received the Ph.D. degree in 1909, the first student taking only two years to earn the doctorate. In the exciting days at Columbia, Payne's thesis research on sex chromosomes contributed to the genetics program which established the chromosome and gene theories for which one of his mentors, T.H. Morgan, later won the Nobel Prize. Payne returned to IU in 1909, joining Professors Will Scott and Carl Eigenmann (department head and first Dean of the Graduate School) to complete the Zoology Department faculty. In 1925 Payne succeeded Jean Eigenmann as Graduate School Dean and Department Chairman. From the outset, Payne recognized two areas of concern: the first, a weakness in the Graduate School structure, standards, and quality; the second, a new growth in American science which he felt should be represented in the graduate faculty of Indiana University. It was not until the beginning of Herman B Wells' administration and the establishment of mandatory retirement at 70 (1937) that Payne was provided the opportunity and encouragement to search out first-rate scientists and other scholars who could contribute to IU's prestige. His vision and persuasiveness resulted in new recruits who later achieved international recognition. As expressed by the then-President Wells:

The man upon whom I relied more than any other to assist in the all-important work was Dean Payne. He wrote letters; he interviewed; he traveled the country searching for the best talent. Many of our stalwarts of today are with us because of his devotion to this task and the accuracy of his judgment.

The capstone of his career was the charting of the graduate program at Indiana University.

He also found time to make important contributions beyond the university as President of the American Society of Zoologists (1931), Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation (1952), Chairman of the Division of Biology and Agriculture of the National Research Council (1932), and Chairman of the Committee on Classification of Universities and Colleges (1934). Special recognition of his contributions to higher education include the honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Indiana Central College (1948) and the honorary Doctor of Science degree from Indiana University (1968).

Payne's research during his long teaching and administrative career was never neglected. He was interested primarily in the cellular basis of biological processes; and his varied investigations included mutational studies, analysis of the eye structure of blind cave fish, studies on comparative sex chromosome conditions, the embryology of jellyfishes and humans, and major contributions to the understanding of the cytology of the anterior and posterior pituitary glands. The latter included some of his most significant papers, centering on the cellular changes in endocrine glands associated with altered hormone secretion and especially with the profound cytological modifications that occur during the ageing process. The endocrine studies were carried out between the ages of 70 and 90, using his newly-acquired skill in electron microscopy to further these investigations. Especially during this period, his matter-of-course devotion to his research was an inspiration to all.

Although never underestimating the importance of academic research, Dean Payne did not alter his belief that the teaching function is the central mission of colleges and universities. His judgment and vision again become apparent in an address delivered to the Graduate Faculty of Iowa State College in 1941:

A democratic society... is a fluctuating society, where the rights and privileges of the individual are given consideration as well as the welfare of the group. To maintain such a society, constant study and readjustment are necessary. How shall we educate for what lies ahead, for the adjustments which are necessary from time to time? I am sure I see a tendency in many places today, and this tendency reaches into our graduate schools, to train for specific jobs.... In a democracy we need an intelligent citizenship, people who can do one or more things well, who in addition have the flexibility to readjust, and who can help in solving individual and national problems. And how does one educate for these desired ends? The answer is not so simple, for there are different ways, but certainly I would not teach only the useful.... Neither would I go to the other extreme and teach nothing but Greek and Roman civilization. Somewhere between these two extremes including parts of both should be found the happy medium best suited to the needs of most of us.

Payne, as Chairman of his department, staunchly defended the rights and privacy of his faculty to teach as each saw fit, and he encouraged and vigorously supported their efforts in advancing their research programs. In a manner which might best be described as partly unfathomable, partly quiet persuasion, Payne was able to knit the diverse personalities of his faculty together into a common fabric in approaching goals. The esprit de corps which resulted spread not only to graduate students but also to the undergraduates, as witness the honor bestowed upon him by the Senior Class of 1966. There was always time in his busy schedule for the serious student to have a chat or to help solve a problem. Of special concern to Dean Payne were good students with financial problems. Having supported himself while attending schools, he was sympathetic to their plight. Toward this end, he established the Fernandus and Elizabeth Payne undergraduate student Scholarship in Zoology.

Faculty and students alike had the utmost respect and admiration for Fernandus Payne. He was a curious mixture of toughness and tenderness: uncompromising about academic standards, tolerant in pleading a student's cause, gentle in revealing his deep appreciation of the beauty in nature.

In recognition of Dean Payne's distinguished service to Indiana University and to his profession, be it resolved that this memorial resolution become part of the minutes of the Bloomington Faculty Council and that copies be sent to his son, Thomas Payne, and to members of his family.

William R. Breneman
Tracy M. Sonneborn
Ruth V. Dippell, chairperson