



Dr. Mitchell H. Payne

February 2, 1950 - June 19, 2026

Mitchell H. Payne, a devoted public servant and educator, passed away leaving behind a legacy shaped by service, leadership, and a gentle, unwavering faith. Born February 2, 1950, in Shelbyville, Kentucky, he was the cherished son of Hattie Mae Payne and the late Llewellyn Rucker Payne.

A barrier-breaker from an early age, Mitchell was among the first African-American students to integrate Shelby County Public Schools. Surrounded by teachers, mentors, and neighbors who nurtured his gifts, he grew into a man who believed deeply in lifting others. His faith was the steady rhythm of his life, strengthened by his church family at St. John United Methodist Church and by the scripture that carried him, Isaiah 40:31.

Education and public service became the heart of Mitchell's calling. After earning degrees from Western Kentucky University and the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law, he taught at the University of Louisville and Kentucky State University, encouraging students with the

same kindness and guidance he once received. He went on to serve more than 40 years in public service, including senior leadership roles at the University of Louisville and later as the first African-American Commissioner for Administration for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Mitchell leaves a legacy of faith, service, and integrity reflected in the communities he uplifted and the countless lives he touched. He is remembered with deep love by his family, friends, fraternity brothers, colleagues, and all who were brightened by his presence. Celebration of Life will be held Monday, June 29, 2026, from 5:00–8:00 p.m. at Burnett Avenue Baptist Church. The Homecoming Celebration will follow on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. Arrangements are entrusted to A. D. Porter & Sons Funeral Home.

Upcoming Events

Visitation

JUN **29**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Burnett Avenue Baptist Church
6800 South Hurstbourne Parkway
Louisville, KY 40291

Service

JUN **30**. 11:00 AM (ET)

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