

PAYNE, ELVIRA GWENLLIAN ('Gwen'; née Hinds) (1917 - 2007), politician and community activist

Name: Elvira Gwenllian ('gwen'; Née Hinds) Payne
Date of birth: 1917
Date of death: 2007
Spouse: Colin Montgomery Payne
Parent: Leonard Hinds
Parent: Gwenllian Hinds (née Lloyd)
Gender: Female
Occupation: politician and community activist
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Activism
Author: Mair Jones

Elvira Gwenllian Payne was born on 28 March 1917 in Morgan Street, Barry, the eldest of two children of Leonard Hinds (1887-1948), a merchant seaman from Barbados, and his wife Gwenllian (née Lloyd) from Barry. Her younger brother was John Darwin Hinds (1922-1981). Her father served as a merchant ship fireman during World War One, and later became a coalminer.

She worked as a carer in London, in a Pontypool munitions factory, and for seventeen years as a school meals supervisor. In 1951, she married Colin Montgomery Payne from Barbados, and they had three sons together.

Gwen and her brother were members of the Labour Party. Her brother had also converted to Islam, and when he was elected to Barry Council in 1958 he became Wales's first Black and first Muslim councillor. Gwen herself then became the first Black female councillor in Wales when she was elected to the Vale of Glamorgan Council in 1972. When her brother became Mayor of the Vale of Glamorgan in 1975 - Wales's first Black Mayor - she acted as 'Lady Mayoress' alongside him. In 1979, she became Deputy Mayor of Barry.

As well as her politics, she played an active role in numerous community and charity initiatives, including as founder secretary of the Guide Dogs for the Blind, as a founder member of Buttrills Community Centre, as president of the Arthritis Care Committee, the Good Street Neighbours Organisation, Roundel House Day Centre, Tenovus Cancer Research and Barry Island Community Centre. Much of this was also after surviving cervical cancer in 1966 and her husband's death in 1978.

Elvira Gwenllian Payne died on 5 April 2007 at Llandough Hospital and she is buried in Barry Cemetery.

Author

Mair Jones

Sources

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Daryl Leeworthy, *Causes in Common* (Cardiff 2022)

Further reading

'Elvira Gwenllian Payne (1917-2007)', *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig / Dictionary of Welsh Biography, People's Collection Wales*

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