

# THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

*Regents Communication*

Adopted by the Regents

May 17, 2007

## ACTION REQUEST

**Subject: Report of Faculty Retirement**

**Action Requested: Adoption of Retirement Memoir**

**Robert B. Payne, Ph.D.**, professor of zoology, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and curator of birds, Museum of Zoology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, will retire from active faculty status on May 31, 2007.

Professor Payne received his B.S. degree from the University of Michigan in 1960 and his Ph.D. degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1965. From 1965-70 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Cape Town (1965-67) and assistant professor at the University of Oklahoma (1967-70). He joined the University of Michigan faculty in 1970 as an assistant professor and curator, was promoted to associate professor and associate curator in 1973, and professor and curator in 1982.

Professor Payne's research focused on the social behavior and systematics of birds, especially of brood parasite species (those laying their eggs in the nests of other bird species) and their hosts. He conducted pioneering field studies of brood parasites and hosts for many years in Africa, Australia, and North America, including over 20 years of population studies in Michigan of indigo buntings and a brood parasite, the brown-headed cowbird. Professor Payne studied aspects of behavioral mimicry, behavioral imprinting, sexual selection, and song learning in numerous avian host and parasite systems. He complemented the field work with detailed, long-term, cross-fostering experiments conducted in his aviaries at the University of Michigan, seeking to understand behavior and song development in a variety of parasitic finches. Professor Payne also used molecular genetic data sets to determine and compare host and parasite bird species phylogenies, to assess their mechanisms and rates of speciation.

Professor Payne taught courses in animal behavior, biology, ornithology, and birds of the world. As curator of birds in the Museum of Zoology, he built and strengthened the collections for the benefit of students and scientists. He was a dissertation advisor or committee member for numerous graduate students, and he served on many departmental faculty committees.

The Regents salute this distinguished researcher and scholar by naming **Robert B. Payne professor emeritus of zoology and curator emeritus of birds.**

**Requested by:**



Sally J. Churchill

Vice President and Secretary of the University

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