

Paynter to retire as CBF executive coordinator

July 19, 2018

Suzii Paynter, who has led the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship five years as the organization's executive coordinator, announced July 19 her plans to retire from the role.

"CBF is at a great place and poised for even greater impact," said Paynter, former director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Thinking of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes that 'to all things there is a season,' I have been led to explore the options available to me as I plan my retirement from the CBF executive coordinator position."

Paynter will remain as CBF executive coordinator during a transitional period until her successor begins work.

Search committee named

A nine-member search committee, with two additional ex officio members, will start work in August to find the next executive coordinator. Jeff Roberts, senior pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., will chair the committee.

Texans on the search committee are Jackie Baugh Moore, a member of Woodland Baptist Church in San Antonio, and Steve Wells, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston.

Other committee members are Courtney Allen of Richmond, Va.; Shaww Chin Capps of Beaufort, S.C.; Juan Garcia of Newport News, Va.; Jennifer Hawks of McLean, Va.; Emmanuel McCall of East Point, Ga.; and Chris

Sanders of Louisville, Ky.

Stephen Cook, senior pastor of Second Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and recorder of the CBF Governing Board, and CBF Moderator Gary Dollar from Dayspring Baptist Church in St. Louis, Mo., will serve as ex officio committee members.

‘Right leader at the right time’

Dollar expressed his appreciation for Paynter and optimism about the Fellowship’s future.

“Suzii has been the right leader at the right time for CBF,” he said. “God equipped Suzii with unique skills, abilities and deep compassion for others, and she faithfully used those things to grow CBF’s work in the kingdom.

“We will miss her phenomenal leadership and energy, but we are optimistic about the future, because we know Suzii built a solid foundation that will give our next leader an exciting opportunity to expand our mission. The entire governing board is deeply appreciative of all Suzii’s done for CBF, and we wish her the best as she follows wherever God takes her from here.”

In March 2013, Paynter became the third Texan and first woman to serve as CBF executive coordinator. It was “tremendous to witness and experience a woman leading a global Baptist body,” said Kasey Jones, CBF moderator in 2014-15, and now associate coordinator of strategic operations and outreach for the Fellowship.

“While discerning my call to ministry, I recognized that not having an image of a woman preacher limited my ability to see myself as preacher,” Jones said. “I applaud CBF for increasing the imagination of girls by calling Suzii Paynter as its leader. She has led with grace, charm, intellect and

boldness. We are and will be better off because of her.”

Guided CBF through governance restructuring

Early in her time as executive coordinator, Paynter worked with Bill McConnell, then moderator and current governing board member, to restructure CBF governance in response to a 2012 task force report.

“During my year chairing the new governing board, I watched Suzii’s gifts for planning and organization lead the Fellowship through the changes required by the report,” McConnell said.

“I remain impressed and thankful to this day in my second term on the governing board for her gifts, hard work and leadership. I have been able to watch her perform her responsibilities in person for almost her entire tenure. She has truly been a blessing to CBF and to me personally.”

During her tenure at CBF, Paynter led the organization in its 25th anniversary and a \$12.5 million fund-raising campaign, and she oversaw a restructure of CBF Global Missions.

She led in diversity initiatives and recruited leaders for the Latino Network, the African-American Network, the McCall Racial Justice and Leadership Initiative and Fellowship Southwest.

She also led CBF through its Illumination Project, which resulted in the governing board adopting a new CBF [hiring policy](#) and implementation plan that allows LGBT individuals to be considered for some staff positions but maintains limits for ministry leadership positions and missions field personnel.

Native Texan

Before she became CBF executive coordinator, Paynter worked with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission from 2001 to 2013—first as its director of public policy and later as commission director and leader of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Advocacy Care Center.

A San Antonio native, Paynter earned her undergraduate degree at Baylor University and her master's degree from Stephen F. Austin State University. She received an honorary doctorate from Dallas Baptist University.

She worked 25 years as a reading specialist, literacy professional and educator in public schools and at the university level.

Paynter—a longtime ordained deacon and Sunday school teacher—was ordained to the gospel ministry May 7, 2017, by Austin Heights Baptist Church in Nacogdoches.

Based on reporting by Jeff Huett with CBF communications.