

Sue Wells Livers

Class of 1966

MCHS Hall of Fame Induction 2022

Sue Wells Livers lived history firsthand. Although textbooks in the 1950s skimmed the story of racial inequality and poverty, the shallow black words on white paper did not fully convey the hurt and stigma of those societal divides.

Livers completed her first three years of elementary education at Broadway School, a segregated entity only two blocks from Madison's white Main Street. She did not experience the advantages, positivity and fellowship of an integrated, more financially stable environment until 1957 when Madison Schools shut the Broadway doors and welcomed African-American students into its halls.

But even as a fourth-grader at Lydia Middleton Elementary, this distinguished alumna immediately sensed the value and force of education and self-determination to confront a society steeped in racism, not necessarily intended but instilled by others who were instilled by others before them. Active in high school with numerous leadership roles, this 1966 MCHS graduate knew she could do more, be more. And do more, be more, Sue Livers did. Four years later, she graduated from Manchester College and added more certifications and degrees down the road from University of Cincinnati and University of Louisville where she attained a master's in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. This MCHS alumna spent her next 34 years as director of nutrition for King's Daughters' Health, followed by a 10-year stint heading the hospital's foundation where she spearheaded a \$4 million drive for a new Cancer Center.

Along the way, career awards and distinguished appointments came from multiple directions, ranging from the Indiana Governor's office, City of Madison to long-serving trusteeships and director positions with River Valley Bank and Ivy Tech Community College. But empathy and respect for her heritage and those experiencing the same financial and cultural obstacles that she faced as a young person never succumbed to a footnote. Livers led the restoration of the historic black church in Hanover. She anchored the Broadway School Alumni Scholarship. She provided the means and path for many of her struggling employees to attain their GED, acquire a driver's license and invest in a retirement plan, regardless of size. For years, she led dozens of seminars on both the value of a healthy lifestyle as well as motivational strategies to overcome financial or societal handicaps.

Forever influenced by the opportunity to meet and converse with Dr. Martin Luther King, each year this vivacious lady during *Black History Month* dons period attire to become Mrs. Patsy Harris who led many slaves to freedom through Madison in the 1800s. As this 2022 honoree demonstrates so well, if one lets positivity, education and willpower guide direction, poverty and societal handicaps become driving forces rather than crippling weights. *Sue Livers lived history, but she also turned history around for herself and others.*

