



**2023 Peace in the Pages
Presented by David and Monique Miller
Award Honorees**

Marjorie Broward Memorial Award

Principal Paula Findlay, Arlington Elementary School



When she was a young girl growing up on Jacksonville’s east side, Principal Paula Findlay’s grandmother, Anne Marie Bright, had a daycare in her home on 12th Street. As the second oldest grandchild in a large family, Paula often helped her grandmother. “I loved pretending to have school in my grandparents’ house - teaching all my baby cousins,” says Findlay. “I just had an innate love for children.” Innate, indeed. Today, after 28 years as an educator, 15 of them as an elementary school principal, Findlay’s love for children is legendary.

At Arlington Elementary School, there is an atmosphere of passion and positivity that emanates from Principal Findlay’s office and touches everyone who enters through the doors. “Thank you for teaching my Dolphins!” shouts the Principal as teachers and tutors walk by in the halls. Wearing her tall, wide-brimmed READ hat and a READ JAX T-shirt emblazoned with the words “20 Minutes a Day Paves the Way,” Principal Findlay is visibly dedicated to making sure that all of her students receive the best education possible.

“I’m blessed to have grown up in Jacksonville, and I have stayed with my roots,” says Findlay, noting that she has a “13th Street Story.” Having attended St. Pius Catholic Elementary on 13th Street for her first six years of schooling, then Stanton

Prep on 13th and Moncrief from 7th through 12th Grade, she started her teaching career at Susie Tolbert Elementary on 13th Street in 1994 - full circle. She earned both her B.A. degree in Elementary Education and her master's degree in Administration and Supervision from the University of North Florida, and received specialized certification at The Principals Institute - Harvard Graduate School of Education, the National Institute of School Leaders, and the Principals Academy.

During her nearly 30 years with the Duval County School District, Principal Paula Findlay has increased her large family a thousand-fold. "My students are part of my family," she declares adamantly, remembering that as a novice teacher, her classroom was her "sweet spot" and she had no interest in administration until her principal at Susie Tolbert, Dr. Pat Willis, convinced her that she could and should work for the greater good by becoming a principal.

"I love what READ USA is doing in my school," she says. "I love it, love it, love it! The fact that teenagers are working with my elementary students - teens who look like them and truly care ... I've seen the improvement. Their excitement is tangible!" Being recognized by READ USA is a plus for Principal Findlay and she is happy about it - especially happy that she will be able to help her teachers with new materials. "Teachers are not always valued as much as they should be," she says. "We are all doing the best we can for this community, and I thank READ USA for all you are doing for my Dolphins!"