James Smart Elementary School: A Catalyst For Change

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As a first grade student at James Smart Elementary School during the 1969 – 70 school year, I was totally oblivious to the controversy surrounding this school and other predominately Black inner city elementary schools. During this turbulent time in Fort Wayne’s history, James Smart Elementary School played a key role in acting as catalyst in changing the make up of Fort Wayne Community School’s elementary schools. This paper takes a look back at the role James Smart Elementary School played in the desegregation of Fort Wayne Community Schools. It also looks at who the pioneer players were in the early stages of the desegregation process, as well as the school boycott of 1969.