Charlotte Native Runs Model School In Connecticut

Rick Walker Special To The Post

Fox Middle School Principal Erline Patrick is a strong leader and disciplinarian, who runs a model school, at a time when our nation is reexamining its educational system. She also has firm opinions about teacher evaluation procedures and the merit pay issue.

Many groups and individuals, including a contingent of Japanese educators, and tennis pro Arthur Ashe, have visited her school. Doris Turner, supervisor of music in the Simsbury School System, said after her visit last month, "Fox Middle has the answer to many questions, problems and concerns that plague the inner cities of America, and the leadership Mrs. Patrick provides sets the tone in the building for high scholar-

Before she came in 1978, me 70 percent of the dents were reading below grade level, and the school did not have a program for the gifted and talented. Today the majority of the students at the Hartford North End school are performing at grade level, and many of them are doing much better.

Some 250 of the 1300 students in the school are capable of doing college work in one to three areas based on the results of the Metropolitan Achievement "Scores are up in Hartford for sixth, seventh and eighth graders," Patrick notes. "Ours have been steadily rising for the past five years."

Patrick is a former science teacher and administrative assistant responsible for discipline at Hartford Public High School. She was a member of a committee which revised the school system's suspen-



ERLINE MAJOR PATRICK

the Charlotte Jazz Society.

Hartford's College of Ed-

ucation and Allied Services

earning her master's

degree and sixth year cer-

tificate, she interned in the

Teacher Corps program,

jointly administered by the

university and the Hartford

School system. In 1970, as a

Teacher Corps unit leader,

she started the first alter-

nate learning center in the

While at the University of

environment.

....Fox Middle School principal

sion policy. But discipline alone is not enough, she also has compassion. One parent, Peggy Beecham, wrote: "I have never seen so many loving and caring people working together to help others. Thank you for the time and patience you have shown me and my son Jeffrey. I feel the attendance program is much needed in all of the schools.

resource teacher

Billie Cox, the resource teacher for the gifted and talented, credits the students' proficiency to the fact that they learn writing before they learn reading and other subjects. She says Patrick has bolstered the morale in the school and created a safe learning

graders. School system of-Hailing from Charlotte, ficials were so impressed North Carolina, she started with her work that they singing at the age of five. asked her to transfer her and was writing music and internship to Fox Middle. starring in a radio show by After helping to plan and open this school, she went the age of 10. As an actress, she has performed ballads on to do the same for and jazz pieces on TV and Hartford's Quirk middle received the most outschool standing artist award from

"The Teacher Corps abolished by the Reagan Administration a year ago was a great resource for teacher training and mak-

A school must have at least 15 percent of its students living below the poverty level to qualify for the program. There may be even more than that percentage at Fox Middle. since well over half of the students receive free lunches. ESP UMBRELLA

ing teachers available for

urban schools," says Pat-

rick, the University's first

black woman regent.

"We could use this type of

Fox Middle is the first

Hartford secondary school

to enter the state's Effec-

tive Schools Program (ESP), says Patrick.

resource today.'

"We had been practicing under the ESP umbrella for three years before joining the program in 1982. It is designed to improve teachers' attitudes and raise expectations regarding students by proving that a positive school environment can counteract the effect of a negative home environment. For many years educators believed that this was not possible, and in many urban schools this is still true. They still feel that the home environment has an overwhelming influence on the school environment, and that many or most of their students are therefore hindered in their learning capabili-

Patrick sees this mindset as a complex, attitudinal problem which is ingrained in the American educational system.

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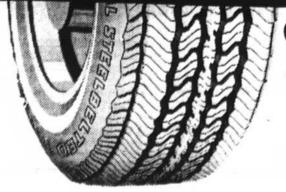
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