PATRICK F. TAYLOR COLLECTION

(Mss 222)

Inventory

Earl K. Long Library
University of New Orleans

October 1990

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Summary

Size: 1 folder

Geographic Locations: New Orleans, La.

Inclusive Dates: late 1980s-early 1990s

Summary: An artificial collection of miscellany by or about Patrick F. Taylor.

Source: Deposit, October 1990

Access: No restrictions

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Citation: Patrick F. Taylor Collection, Earl K. Long Library, University of New Orleans
Patrick F. Taylor was born in Beaumont, Texas, on June 12, 1937, the son of Sibyl Partin Taylor Gayman and Alex Taylor. He left home at age sixteen but completed school with the help of a full scholarship from the Kinkaid School in Houston. After high school he attended Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, which did not charge tuition. During his sophomore year at LSU, Taylor joined the Marine Corps PLC officer-training program, but a heart condition prevented him from completing his senior course and he was honorably discharged from the Corps on October 16, 1959.

After graduating from LSU with a degree in petroleum engineering, Taylor worked for Texas oilman John Mecom, Sr. until 1966. Later he formed his own consulting and production company, before starting Circle Bar Drilling Company with Mecom in 1974. That very successful drilling contracting company was sold in 1979, at which time Taylor founded Taylor Energy Company in New Orleans. Taylor Energy Company is one of the larger independent oil companies in the Gulf of Mexico to explore for and produce oil and natural gas in Federal offshore waters in the Gulf of Mexico. At the time of his death, he was president, CEO, and sole owner of the company.

In March 1988, Taylor was invited to speak to 183 underachieving and troubled inner-city seventh- and eighth-grade students who planned to drop out of school. Remembering the significance of his own college opportunity, Taylor decided that he would not give a typical "role model" speech. Instead, he promised the kids that he would see to it that they went to college. They would be required to stay in school, stay out of trouble, and complete a college preparatory high school curriculum with a "B" average. The response from the students and their parents was overwhelming. Many went on to college, and five of those students were recognized in Who's Who among American High School Students.

During the course of these efforts, Taylor realized for the first time that an entire generation of America's low-income youth was growing up thinking that college was "for other folks." Taylor initiated research in Louisiana to determine the reason for this belief. That study confirmed that fully three-quarters of Louisiana families could not afford college for their children—a circumstance not limited to Louisiana.

Convinced that all children are entitled to the opportunity to achieve success, Taylor conceived and prepared legislation for Louisiana to address this issue. The first bill introduced provided for state-paid college tuition for academically qualified students from families of less than $25,000 annual income (income cap has since been removed). Applicants had to have completed an advanced high school core curriculum, achieved at 2.5 grade point average, and a minimum score of 18 on the American College Test (raised to 20, effective Fall 1999). After a ferocious battle in the Louisiana Legislature, this bill
became Act 789 and the first "Taylor Plan" was signed into law on July 10, 1989. In
Louisiana, a college education for all children was now based on their ability to learn
rather than their ability to pay.

In the meantime, the national media coverage of Taylor’s unique offer to the
original 183 "Taylor’s Kids" had attracted the attention of Mike Wallace, longtime CBS
newsman. Wallace had CBS cover the legislative battle during the summer of 1989, and
he personally interviewed the kids and their parents. In September of that year, 60
Minutes ran a feature on Taylor’s Kids, the Taylor Plan, and Patrick Taylor. The national
attention caused by the 60 Minutes feature led to a flood of invitations for Taylor to carry
his message around the nation. He traveled nearly a million miles and gave thousands
of speeches and interviews in support of Taylor Plan legislation.

What began in Louisiana as the first state-paid, merit-based tuition program spread
to include nineteen states with Taylor Plan programs. Millions of American children have
had the opportunity to go to college based on their ability to learn and not their ability to
pay.

In 1986 Taylor founded the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation, a philanthropic
organization benefiting education, law enforcement, military, community charitable
organizations, and other humanitarian efforts. Taylor was recognized as the first and only
billionaire from Louisiana by Forbes 400 The Richest People in America.

Taylor received awards and honors from many organizations, including the United
States Marine Corps, Marine Forces Reserve, Marine Corps League, Department of the
Navy, Veterans of Foreign Wars, U.S. Olympic Committee, Horatio Alger Association of
Distinguished Americans, National Brotherhood of Christians and Jews, NAACP, Urban
League, Society of Petroleum Engineers, Caring Institute, Kiwanis International, Rotary
International, Volunteers of American, Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, and the
National Football League. Pope John Paul II bestowed upon him the Medal of
Benemerente, the highest award given by the Vatican to a non-Catholic. Numerous local,
state and Federal law-enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of
Investigation, the U.S. Customs Service, and the U.S. Secret Service, have cited Taylor's
efforts. In addition to his numerous awards and honors, Taylor received several honorary
doctorates from colleges and universities. He served on various boards of national
charitable foundations, as well as the National Petroleum Council.

At the time of his death on November 5, 2004, of bacterial endocarditis, Patrick F.
Taylor was 67 years of age. He was survived by his wife of 39 years, Phyllis Miller Taylor.
He was buried at the Patrick F. Taylor Cemetery at Circle Bar Ranch in Foxworth,
Mississippi.

Container List

The collection has not been processed.

Index Terms

Education—Louisiana—New Orleans
Philanthropists—Louisiana—New Orleans
Taylor, Patrick F.