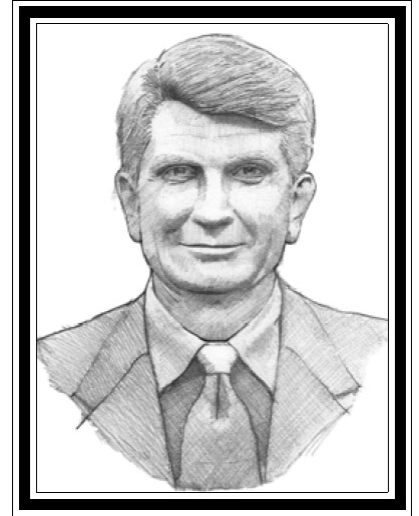


Patrick F. Taylor 1937-2004

In March 1988, Patrick F. Taylor stood before a roomful of 7th and 8th graders at New Orleans' Livingston Middle School and challenged them to discover how far their abilities would take them if they dared to achieve. Many of the students were old enough to be in high school, but they had failed to advance due to substandard academic performance and poor behavior. School administrators hoped Mr. Taylor's story would inspire the students, but he knew they needed more incentive. Instead of telling them the story of his rise from poverty to successful oilman, Mr. Taylor pledged to pay for their college education if they created their own stories of triumph.

Mr. Taylor credited education for his business success, and he wanted to give these students the same opportunities he had as a young man. A native of Beaumont, Texas, Mr. Taylor earned a petroleum engineering degree from Louisiana State University in 1959, after graduating from the Kinkaid School in Houston, which he attended on a scholarship. He received his education at LSU for free, enabling the ambitious young Texan to pursue his dream of working in the oil fields. He returned to Texas upon graduation to work for Mr. John Mecom, Sr.



Patrick F. Taylor

Louisiana came calling once again when the time came to start his own company, and Mr. Taylor founded the Taylor Energy Company in New Orleans in 1979, which became the only solely owned independent company to explore for and produce oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico. It was eventually named as one of the top 100 private employers in New Orleans, La., due to Mr. Taylor's practice of hiring and contracting with Louisiana companies.

Mr. Taylor's impromptu promise on that 1988 spring morning, a college education for those who completed a preparatory curriculum in high school with a B average or better and stayed out of trouble, was the humble start to a revolution in higher education. After his visit to Livingston Middle School, Mr. Taylor helped draft legislation to expand his plan to capable under-privileged children throughout the state. The Louisiana legislature passed the "Taylor Plan" in July 1989, cementing a bond between him and "Taylor's Kids" that continues to this day.



Ms. Phyllis Taylor and artist Patrick Miller stand with Mr. Taylor's memorial plaque

"It's the most amazing thing, when I can assure [young people] that public policy has changed," proclaimed Mr. Taylor. "When I tell them that the barrier at the end of high school has been removed. When I tell them that, like me, they can dream."

Mr. Taylor, founder of the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), the state-funded program that provides college tuition assistance to thousands of undergraduate students enrolled in state institutions of higher education in Louisiana each year, championed the introduction of programs similar to TOPS that are now in place in 23 states nationwide. Today, millions of young Americans have an opportunity to attend college based upon their ability to learn, rather than their ability to pay.

“Not once did he fail to describe how Louisiana State University had provided educational opportunity for him as a young man who lacked funds, and to give the University and its faculty great credit for his success in life,” said close family friend and LSU chancellor emeritus, Dr. James H. Wharton.

Nowhere is Mr. Taylor’s influence on education felt more deeply than his adopted home state of Louisiana. Mr. Taylor credited education for much of his success, and he was a generous patron of LSU throughout his life. His time at LSU was at the heart of Mr. Taylor’s storied career, and he remained committed to promoting engineering on campus. Mr. Taylor further supported and was recognized by LSU. He served on the LSU Board of Supervisors from 1983-1986. LSU awarded Mr. Taylor its Doctor of Science and Humane Letters degree in 1990. In 1993, he received the LSU Foundation President’s Award for Lifetime Support. In 1999, he was inducted into the College of Engineering’s Hall of Distinction, the highest honor that the College bestows on its most distinguished alumni and friends in the engineering profession.

In 2007 LSU renamed the building that houses the College of Engineering in his honor. In April 2013, Phyllis M. Taylor, LSU College of Engineering Breaking New Ground campaign co-chair, announced a \$15 million gift commitment to honor the legacy of Patrick F. Taylor and accelerate the momentum of the \$100 million public/private partnership to support the renovation of Patrick F. Taylor Hall and construction of a chemical engineering facility. The pledge represents the largest private donation to the College of Engineering in its history.

“The way I want to be remembered is by the young people of this nation and my ties to them. I tell them that, like me, they can dream. I talk about hard work, integrity and guts. I demand that of them and they respond.”
- **Patrick F. Taylor**

“From a very early age, Patrick was determined to become an ‘oil man,’” said Mrs. Taylor. “The College of Engineering at LSU provided him with the education to see that ambition become a reality. Immediately after graduation from LSU, Patrick began helping others to attend college and realize their goals. I can think of no more appropriate means of furthering his desires to help others and our society than by assisting in the funding of the much needed renovation of the building known as Patrick F. Taylor Hall.”

The true testament of his legacy, however, are the TOPS Scholars who walk the halls of the Patrick F. Taylor Hall and the LSU campus at-large. Each fall, students who, like Mr. Taylor, are brimming with academic potential but lack the funds to attend college, enroll at LSU because he believed their abilities and not the size of their parents’ bank accounts should dictate how far they go.

“I know all of you heard in my introduction about my being listed in the Forbes magazine,” Taylor said during the last speech he delivered before his death from a cardiovascular infection on November 5, 2004. “That is not the way I want to be remembered. It is far more important to me that I be remembered by the young people of this nation and my ties to them. I tell them that, like me, they can dream. I talk about hard work, integrity and guts. I demand that of them and they respond.”



Patrick F. Taylor Hall on Louisiana State University's Campus in Baton Rouge

While Mr. Taylor’s monetary contributions to higher education are laudable, it was his fierce dedication to making higher education accessible to everyone, regardless of economic status, that earned him the esteem of his peers and of which he was most proud.

Patrick F. Taylor was fiercely dedicated to the notions of preparation for college study and access to college regardless of a student’s economic status. His lifelong service to the engineering profession, his alma mater, community, state and country exemplifies the attributes of the “LSU Engineer.”