

From the Desk of the Chancellor

Religious diversity highlighted

[MORE SHARING SERVICES](#) [SHARE](#)

February 17, 2015

by Charles R. Bantz

"To be religious today is to be interreligious in the sense that a positive relationship with believers of other faiths is a requirement of a world of religious pluralism. Believers of other religions ... have helped us to respect the plurality of religions as the human response to God's salvific work in peoples and cultures. Dialogue is a new way of being Church, for 'we are all pilgrims set out to find God in human hearts.'" -- Society of Jesus, General Congregation 34

For those who may be unfamiliar with the career of Dr. Joseph T. Taylor, he served as a professor of sociology from 1965 to 1983 and was the first dean of the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI from 1967 to 1978. Dr. Taylor is remembered for his commitment to dialogue and diversity. In 2008, the building that houses University College and the Multicultural Center was renamed Taylor Hall.

The **Joseph T. Taylor Symposium** honors him for his many contributions to the university and the community by hosting informed discussion on issues of concern in urban America. The 26th annual symposium today explored the religious diversity of Indianapolis through a blend of performances and conversation.

The **Department of Religious Studies'** role in overseeing the event continues the School of Liberal Arts' tradition of having a different department in charge of the Taylor Symposium each year. This year's theme, "Encountering Religions Through Performance," was based on the premise that there is more to the practice of religion than beliefs and sacred texts.

"Religions are also expressed through performances," said Peter Thuesen, event co-organizer, professor and chair of the Department of Religious Studies in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. "These performances may involve such activities as singing, dancing, drumming or chanting, but they can also consist of devotional rituals observed either publicly or privately."

Participants include the Sancocho Music and Dance Collage; Light of the World Gospel Ensemble; Anil Bajpai, board of trustees member of the Hindu Temple of Central Indiana; and IU medical student Mohamad Saltagi, who organizers say has memorized the entire Quran.

This timely and purposeful forum remains an excellent vehicle for the School of Liberal Arts to connect the campus to the community through dialogue and activities that advance appreciation for the richness of diversity that characterizes Indianapolis, the state and beyond.

I congratulate those responsible for organizing and implementing this ongoing tribute to the legacy of Dr. Taylor, honoring his tremendous impact on IUPUI.

The annual symposium is a work worthy of sustaining because, in the words of Cesar Chavez, "We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community -- and this nation."

[Read more From the Desk of the Chancellor stories »](#)