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University College Building Now Named Joseph T. Taylor Hall

The building housing IUPUI's University College has been named for Joseph T. Taylor in honor of the man who served as dean of the Indianapolis Regional Campus from 1967 to 1970 (pre-IUPUI) and as the first dean of the newly established IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI (1970-1978).

"Because he was instrumental in implementing the merger that led to the establishment of IUPUI, it is fitting that his name be attached to one of the original buildings," Bantz said. "As an African American, Dr. Taylor was a pioneer at every stage of his academic career. He infused that can-do spirit and ability to break new ground into the very core of what has made IUPUI successful today."

Taylor served as a Professor of Sociology from 1965–1983 and as the first Dean of the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI from 1967–1978. The entire community was saddened by his death in September 2000. He is remembered for his commitment to dialogue and diversity.

"I think Dr. Taylor would be delighted to see his name attached to the building that houses not only University College, but also the Multi-Cultural Center," said Scott Evenbeck, Dean of University College.

Evenbeck recalled working closely with Taylor when he formed the Dialogue Group, comprised of members of the community who provided valuable insights into IUPUI. "That group did much to shape IUPUI and IUPUI's ongoing commitment to students. Much of what we do in University College is a continuation of the work Dr. Taylor started on the downtown campus of Indiana University many years ago."

University College provides orientation, academic advising and academic support for entering students, work that has been nationally recognized as a model for supporting students entering college. "There is a direct relationship between that recognition, which includes being named an "Institution of Excellence," and the foundation Dr. Taylor laid many years ago," Evenbeck said.

"It is exciting that the person the campus can honor and hold up as a role model with entering students is someone who in many ways is the father of the IUPUI we all know now," Evenbeck said.

Speaker Remarks from the Dedication Ceremony

Monroe Little 

Chancellor Charles Bantz 

Scott Evenbeck 

Dominic Dorsey 

William Blomquist

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Monroe Little

Thank you Chancellor Bantz for that introduction. I also want to thank Dean Blomquist, Dean Evenbeck and last, but not least, Dominic Dorsey for joining me on this momentous occasion.

Colleagues, students, members of the Taylor family--especially Mrs. Taylor--and assembled guests. It was once observed by none other than the man we are honoring today that oratory is "the art of making a loud noise seem like a deep thought." With that in mind, I will make every effort to not be overly loud; and I forewarn you that there is not much in the way of deep thought contained in my remarks. This day has been a long one in coming. It is the result of many years of lobbying on Dr. Taylor's behalf by friends and colleagues since his passing. Some of those individuals, such as Sam Jones and Bill Taylor, are not with us today. They, like Dr. Taylor, have achieved their much deserved eternal rest. I think that all of us who are gathered here this afternoon, however, would agree that today was well worth the wait.

Dr. Joseph Thomas Taylor, an instrumental founding father of IUPUI, was a man of deep conviction, an educator who served his colleagues, his community, his people, and his country with distinction. We are now honoring his legacy and family with deep respect. I have often told my students that there is a fate much worse than death; and that fate is being completely forgotten. By renaming University College Joseph T. Taylor Hall, the University insures that such a fate will not befall Dr. Taylor.

Colleagues and friends remember Dr. Taylor as a patient mentor, inspirational teacher, avid sportsfan, loyal friend, and a master storyteller as well as a man of wisdom, patience, vision, and leadership. As one colleague observed, "There was nobody that he did not consider part of his extended family. He set a tone of mutual respect and civility in the School of Liberal Arts-- not only by what he said and how he said it, but more importantly, by what he did." The beloved community--a phrase from the halcyon days of the civil rights era--which Dr. Taylor attempted to create here during the early days of IUPUI was absolutely critical for establishing the tone for how we treated students and faculty.

Yet above all, Dr. Taylor cared deeply about America's youth and their future as well as the Black community's empowerment and progress. In addition to his work as a professor of Sociology at Florida A & M, Albany State College and Dillard University Dr. Taylor served as an Area Director in the New Deal's National Youth Administration. His initial reason for coming to Indianapolis in 1957 was to serve as Director of Program Development at Flanner House. Renaming this building Joseph Taylor Hall--which already serves as the gateway to entering students at IUPUI and will house the University's new, much needed and long overdue Multi-cultural Center--is a fitting tribute to his life's work.

Indianapolis is quite a distance from Rolling Fork, Mississippi, where Dr. Taylor was born--a distance made even longer when one arrives here by the circuitous route of East Saint Louis where he grew up; Texas, Illinois and Indiana where he attended college and graduate school; the battlefields of France, Germany and Belgium where he served with the U. S. Army's all-black 999th Field Artillery Battalion; and Florida, Georgia and Louisiana where he worked variously as a faculty member and administrator at a host of black colleges and universities. We are thankful that he eventually came to our city and made it his home.

At a time when the bi-racial son of a black Kenyan immigrant father and a white native American mother may become president of the United States, it is easy for us to forget--even for us who were alive then--what the state of race relations was like during the early years of Dr. Taylor's academic career. Faculty of color seem so ubiquitous on U. S. college campuses today, we fail to remember that it was not until 1941--the same year Dr. Taylor was called to active duty in the military--that the first black American was appointed a regular, full-time faculty member at a predominantly white institution of higher education. Indeed, the entire United States at that time was a country awash in racial prejudice and discrimination. Elevators in southern cities, such as Birmingham, Alabama displayed signs reserving them for "Negroes and Freight" (I'm using the politically correct appellation to describe the content of this sign.), while nooses were not mere symbols of black oppression, but an

all-too-real horrific enforcer of American apartheid. Legal segregation was the rule in the South, while defacto segregation was the norm in northern states such as Indiana. A 1969 Foreign Affairs article, worth reading even today, reminds us that as late as the 1940s the world was still by and large a Western white-dominated world. Long established patterns of white power and the exploitation of non-whites were still the generally accepted order of things. All the accompanying assumptions and mythologies about race and color were still mostly taken for granted. White supremacy "was a generally assumed and accepted state of affairs in the United States as well as in Europe's empires."

Perhaps it is worth noting here that Dr. Taylor's lengthy association with IUPUI--the primary reason we are gathered here today--was no sure thing, even in the early 1960s. Mr. Virgil Hunt, who was instrumental in bringing Dr. Taylor to IU, remembers that when he requested Dr. Taylor's appointment as a full-time faculty member at the Indianapolis extension in 1962 Bloomington administrator's asked him, "Do you think we're ready for this?" The same question was asked when Dr. Taylor was recommended for appointment as IUPUI's first Dean of Liberal Arts. In both instances Hunt replied, "Well, if you're not ready, you'd better get ready, because we're ready here." We're grateful to the powers that be at IU--Bloomington that they did not bar the door of opportunity to Dr. Taylor.

Two years after Dr. Taylor received his honorable discharge from the Army, President Harry S. Truman's Commission on Higher Education issued its multi-volume final report. This little known or referenced document established federal policy for higher education for the next two decades and beyond. Entitled, Higher Education for American Democracy, the report proposed sweeping changes in U. S. higher education. Specific recommendations included "the abandonment of European concepts of education and the development of a curriculum attuned to the needs of a democracy; the doubling of college attendance by 1960; the integration of vocational and liberal education; the extension of free public education through the first 2 years of college for all youth who can profit from such education; the elimination of racial and religious discrimination; revision of the goals of graduate and professional school education to make them effective in training well-rounded persons as well as research specialists and technicians; and the expansion of Federal support for higher education through scholarships, fellowships, and general aid."

A little over two decades after the Commission's report IUPUI was founded--and Dr. Taylor was present at its creation. It was a daunting task, but not without its humorous moments. The Director of the downtown campus, Mr. Hunt, remembers seeking the advice of the Dean of the Medical School, John Van Nuys about where to locate the first buildings that would become known as IUPUI. Van Nuys instructed him to, "Get just as close as you can without adding to the parking problem." We'll, at least we got half of it right.

Parking was the least of Dr. Taylor's or his staff's problems in those early years. They were confronted with working out the details of the merger of the IU and Purdue extensions in Indianapolis, coordinating planning for the School of Liberal Arts's new home, addressing the concerns and objections of the neighborhood's residents who lost their homes as a consequence of the relocation, rationalizing the organization of the undergraduate faculty by the creation of three new schools-- Liberal Arts, Science and Engineering & Technology--and the melding of two university operations into an unprecedented, seemingly impossible single unit managed by one university--Indiana--but offering the programs and degrees of both. Years of hard work would fill his days and nights in meeting these challenges, as both Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Brandenstein will testify. Dr. Taylor was a pioneer; and pioneers, by necessity, have to work harder. His untiring, ceaseless effort as well as that of his staff and colleagues succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of all involved. He also presided over impressive growth of the School of Liberal Arts despite continued neglect, lack of funding, and the frequent loss of badly needed classrooms in Cavanaugh to various central administration offices. With a vision of the future and the university's mission, tenacity, tact, and diplomacy Dr. Taylor made the School of Liberal Arts and IUPUI what they are today. His contribution to higher education and Indiana University is one that few, if any, will ever equal.

Today's building renaming ceremony is a fitting tribute to a modest, self effacing, dedicated colleague and public servant; a man of integrity and dignity who had the vision to insure that this institution of higher education would grow and prosper. He made an enduring mark on the School of Liberal Arts, this campus, the city of Indianapolis and Indiana University. Dr. Taylor had a deep and abiding faith in the power of education to make a difference in the lives of people, achieving human equality and creating a just, multiracial society. He believed, as did the Victorian author Charlotte Bronte, that "Prejudices...are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks."

We gather today to do much more than rename a building today, however. We gather to rededicate ourselves to the unfinished work of this university. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. The Irish poet William Butler Yeats once said, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Like Yeats, Dr. Taylor believed that education was more than the mere memorization of rote facts, but the critical engagement with facts that is the foundation of all learning, the basis of all knowledge and the path to true wisdom.

Real dedications are found in lives lived, days devoted. With each act of service, mentoring and education, this building will be dedicated to Dr. Taylor's memory. Long after the world has forgotten or little remembers the words spoken here today this building and its new name--Taylor Hall--will inspire IUPUI staff and faculty to further the work of the man we honor today. It will be rededicated each day as its portals welcome the next generation of students; as the seeds of intellectual curiosity are planted in young minds; as lives are transformed; and future leaders of our city, state, nation, and the world are nurtured.

We therefore look to the future. Dr. Joseph Taylor's legacy challenges us profoundly to endurance and resilience to fulfill the afore-mentioned goals; and we're ready to accept the challenge. His life is a constant reminder to each and every one of us that this university will, God willing, fulfill its educational mission, its democratic promise. It is a witness to our faith that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. It is a symbol of our continuing commitment to Dr. Taylor's vision of higher education's transformative possibilities and democratic promise which only makes us stronger, ever more hopeful and resolute in our conviction that education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave.

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Chancellor Charles Bantz

Welcome to this special day in the history of IUPUI.

Today, we honor a man who was instrumental in the founding and development of IUPUI in its early years. When Joe Taylor and his family settled in Indianapolis in 1957, they entered a lifelong partnership with both a city and a university. His devotion to creating opportunities for higher education in this dynamic and diverse city made him one of the visionaries that helped shape what is now considered a model in urban higher education—IUPUI.

As an African American, Dr. Taylor was a pioneer at every stage of his academic career. He infused that perseverance and ability to break new ground into the very core of what has made IUPUI successful today.

One of the great events in Dr. Taylor's academic life as a young scholar of sociology was his participation in the landmark Carnegie-Myrdal study that resulted in the 1944 publication of *The American Dilemma: The Negro Problems and Modern Democracy*. The Carnegie-Myrdal study employed the leading black and white social science scholars of the day, including the poet, teacher, and scholar Sterling Brown; Diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Ralph Bunch; and Butler Jones, later of Cleveland State's sociology department, but whose students included Martin Luther King, Jr., when he taught at Atlanta University.

The book that Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal published cast the American race issue in terms of the "moral dilemma" of the white American torn between his belief in the "American creed" of democracy and racial prejudice. Writing a decade before the concept of "cognitive dissonance," Gunnar Myrdal assumed that individuals could not live with moral contradictions, that they would be driven by guilt and anxiety to bring their actions into consonance with their beliefs in equality, democracy, and individual freedom.

Many say, it is that way of viewing the civil rights movement that gave Martin Luther King, Jr., the ability to capture the attention and support of whites. He forced them to face their moral contradictions.

Although Joe Taylor was just among those doing what he called "the leg work" on the Myrdal study, the experience helped shape his views of education and race relations.

In an interview for the Indianapolis Recorder in 1993, he said, it takes "good will, hard work, and luck" to be successful and that education is key to being prepared when luck happens.

In the last Taylor Symposium he attended, the year of his death in 2000, he spoke again of the importance of education when he said:

"We are not accustomed to setting aside time for public discussion of some critical issues unless something comes to a crisis, which rarely results in a true resolution. You can think in a crisis, but you don't bring enough information to a social issue in a one-night meeting."

Our campus community was faced with a crisis in November 2006 when the Black Student Initiative generated a soul-searching. As Dr. Taylor predicted, we needed time for discussion and information sharing to come to a true resolution of all the issues. One of the things we found we needed to have to promote better understanding in our diverse community was a Multicultural Center. So, it is even more fitting that we name the building that will house the center Taylor Hall, in his honor.

We are delighted that members of the Taylor family are with us today. I'd like to recognize them at this time.

Hertha Taylor
Hussain Taylor
George Taylor
Judy Taylor

Eddie Washington

We are deeply honored to be able to make this commemorative naming in honor of Dr. Joseph Taylor.

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Scott Evenbeck

Good afternoon. It is a very special day for Indianapolis and for IUPUI. I joined IUPUI in 1972 and during my first years, I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Taylor and to learn from him. I remember well a faculty retreat he sponsored on the northwest side. He was a giant on campus and a giant in the community. But he never called attention to himself. His quiet manner coupled with his commitment to students and their learning set a high standard for all of us to follow. He was a generous mentor to faculty, staff, and students.

I think sometimes that some amongst us are visionaries and that others are able to roll up their sleeves and do the work required to make things better. Dr. Taylor's leadership coupled both these crucial aspects of leadership—he could see and articulate the big picture. But, he also worked and worked hard to make things better.

I think Dr. Taylor would be very pleased to have the building named in his honor, the building where we will be intentional in living out his legacy, including University College and the Multicultural Center (and of course, next door to the School of Liberal Arts). The collaboration of these units, taken together with the School of Science, provides the foundation for undergraduate education for the campus serving the largest number of first generation and low income students and students reflecting diversity in our state, a campus where 97% of the students come from Indiana and where well over half are the first in their families in higher education. Dr. Taylor celebrated and supported all students, but he was always first to support our students from Indiana.

There's an inscription in the basement of St. Paul's, London, about Christopher Wren, the architect. It says "if you wish to see my memorial, look around you." I think Dr. Taylor might make that claim about the work that goes on here. Dr. Taylor helped launch IUPUI's legacy in supporting the academic achievement and persistence of our students. And, we live out his legacy here today and into the future in Joseph T. Taylor Hall.

It is an honor for all of us in the building to be able to work in a place where we always, every day, will be reminded of his legacy.

We are planning a major event this year—to celebrate IUPUI's 40th anniversary, University College's 10th anniversary, and the birthday of the Multicultural Center. By then, we will have in place additional ways to celebrate Dr. Taylor's life and leadership at IUPUI.

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Dominic Dorsey

On November 2, 2006; a group of students later to be referred to as the Black Student Initiative sought to improve IUPUI and the quality of life for African American students. With a list of efforts and measures that should be taken on their behalf and in democratic actions reminiscent of the demonstrations decades earlier, handed the IUPUI administration a report detailing what black students saw through their eyes. These things included a lack of cultural competency, the absence of a Multicultural Center, the inability to major in African American and Diaspora Studies and the destruction of the Mary Cable building, one of the few buildings on campus to feature the name of a prominent African American from the community. After more demonstrations, more conversation, further challenges, much nationwide attention and a series of news articles written, all eyes were on IUPUI wondering what the students would do if these challenges were not met. Seeing as how today marks the official naming of Joseph T. Taylor Hall,...I guess we'll never know.

As an African American student and recent graduate of the School of Liberal Arts, I am extremely pleased in the naming of this building honoring Joseph T. Taylor's legacy. This building, with its inclusion of a new Multicultural Center encompasses Taylor's life-long interest in issues of urban life and diversity.

As one of two commissioners charged with assisting school officials in the desegregating of schools, serving as a field investigator while a teaching fellow at Florida A & M, studying "The Negro in America – An American Dilemma." Serving as director of the Black Clergy Leaders, a campus educational community outreach program that provided managerial and organizational assistance and training to local ministers who had not attended seminary; it's easy to surmise that Joseph T. Taylor was an active man, but more so an activist; once again a man after my own heart. So I'm confident that it would warm his; knowing that IUPUI now offers scholarships and soon undergraduate degrees in African American and Diaspora Studies, has frequent rallies organized by students which include the faith based community and in an act of preserving equity not unlike desegregation, the building which bears his name now houses Adaptive Educational Services which offers quality educational assistance and fights for accessibility for Americans with Disabilities here at IUPUI, the often invisible minority.

As a retired professor of Sociology, a systematic study of society, social relationships, social interaction, and culture; I envision a smile drawn across his face knowing organizations such as Black Student Union, Latino Student Association, Native American Student Alliance and Gay and Straight Alliance are all integral components of the Multicultural Center. The academic in him would more than likely be pleased in the efforts of the office for Student Success which focuses on raising the retention rates of African American men and women, as well as Multicultural Outreach which gives children ages elementary through middle school a dream and ambition to obtain a college degree no matter what the obstacle. These efforts speak directly to what Taylor believed in his heart. At the February 2000 Taylor Symposium, Mr. Taylor once said "We are not accustomed to setting aside time for public discussion of some critical issues unless something comes to a crisis, which rarely results in a true resolution. You can think in a crisis, but you don't bring enough information to a social issue in a one-night meeting."

How proud would he be; knowing that a building which bore his name housed such pro-active organizations and offices which fight for social change and tackle issues of a critical nature every day with great success? Another great man, maybe you've heard of him; named Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "You can put your foot on the back of my neck to keep my face in the mud, but that means you're not going anywhere either." The Joseph T. Taylor Hall, a building which contains both University College and the IUPUI Multicultural Center, helps those in need get that foot off their neck and with strong leadership and student support, but also helps point the foot that kept them back for so long in the positive direction for the benefit of all students and all mankind.

Chancellor Gerald Bepko once said of Taylor "His legacy of high achievement will be sustained in all the thousands of people whose lives he touched." In saying this, Chancellor Bepko was actually half right. Joseph T. Taylor's memory will always live on in the memory of the countless students, faculty and staff he has touched, and those he has affected inadvertently with his spirit of caring, civic

engagement and social change which permeates the Schools here. However, on this date, May 19th, 2007, his mark will now be left on thousands of students who each semester enter through this hall and continue his legacy by graduating and contributing to a city and school he helped found and worked so hard for.

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