



Richard Hembree Taylor... Dick Taylor... Uncle Dick passed

He is remembered by friends and extended family for his infectious smile, reassuring voice, congenial personality and keen sense of humor.

## DICK TAYLOR



Dick was born October 29, 1931 in Chick Springs, South Carolina, to parents Roy Lee Taylor and Ethel Velma Hembree Taylor. The Taylors and the Hembrees had been pioneers in South Carolina back-country since the mid-1700s.

Roy was chief accountant for the textile mill, Pacific Mills, and Union Bleachery. Ethel worked in the secretarial pool. Roy installed the first revolving inventory system in the plants using International Business Machines (IBM) technology. He was offered an opportunity to buy stock in the company at \$10 a share but he had to buy 100 shares. Roy decided to keep his money in the bank making a solid 2%. Roy and Ethel laughed about what might have been "if only" but they had a good life. Dick always took that as solid evidence that some folks just aren't supposed to be financially rich and that there are other things to value in life.

Growing up in the small Lyman textile community Dick enjoyed opportunities to play many sports. He was a natural athlete and would become a faithful sports fan. He played ping pong left or right handed and some football but baseball was his passionate pastime. He played American Legion junior baseball and also played semi-pro baseball in the "textile leagues" while in high school.

He was disappointed when his applications for a baseball scholarship to college were unsuccessful. It would be 30 years before he discovered why it did not happen. Dick loved baseball. There is a legendary story about an ill-fated baseball game while he worked at WBT. When he was 62 he was the winningest pitcher in the Asheville City Slow Pitch D League.



Dick's volunteer work for South Carolina Wildlife



A favorite golf story was about the very cold and windy day he three putted the last green on the Old Course at St. Andrews to shoot 90.



Foregoing his parents hope of engineering as a career, Dick transferred from Georgia Tech to the University of South Carolina and changed the course of his life. His roommates were members of a radio club which staffed the campus radio station, WUSC. One of his friends "dared" him to join the club and try out for an announcing job. He accepted the challenge and got the "job."

At the same time, Dick took a part time job with Columbia's WIS as a studio engineer. In his spare time, he worked long and hard with a tape recorder to improve his speaking voice and his Southern accent.

Dick got his first full-time announcing job in 1952 with radio station WBCU in Union, SC, handling all types of programs ranging from news and sports-casting to acting as disc jockey for a record show. After five months with WBCU, he moved to station WORD in Spartanburg and then, a year later, branched out into television as a jack-of-all-trades announcer with WSJS (now WXII) in Winston-Salem, NC.

On October 18, 1954 Dick signed the new Florence, SC TV station WBTW on-the-air. One of four staff



announcers, he continued to work in all aspects of the business. This background suited his personality. He always thought of himself as a utility infielder; someone who could cover all the bases.

Working at WBTW/WBT/WBTV was a dream come true. But when Dick went to work at WBTV he was hired not as an announcer but in sales. He auditioned his way to become a primary spokesman in commercial and production development for the company.

Dick worked for Jefferson Pilot Broadcasting; WBTW, WBT, WBTV, Jeffersonics and Jefferson Productions for 25 years. He spent the last 18 at WBTV. He was a contributing editor to the "Top of the Day" show and co-hosted "This Morning" show with Jim Patterson and CJ Underwood.



Working with Jeffersonics and Jefferson Productions offered opportunities for national as well as regional work. At one time his voice was being used in every theme park on the east coast.

Dick left in 1981 for an opportunity to follow another dream; part ownership of a radio station in Key West.

While in Key West, he and partners started "The Last Resort Advertising", DBA first as Foth-Taylor and then as Taylor & Baron Advertising providing clients with full service PR, marketing, media production and event plan-



ning. Dick's mom, Ethel, came to live with us in Key West for a while. She had Alzhemier's disease. We learned a lot but ultimately she needed more care than we could provide. We were fortunate to place her in a care facility close to family in South Carolina.



When the kids went away to college, Dick and Keets closed the business and returned to their mountain home in North Carolina. He would free-lance as a voice talent locally and nationally for John Causby/The Ground Crew, Sun Spots, Catwalk, Charles Holloman, and Jay Howard Productions among numerous others.

Free-lancing allowed Dick the time to indulge a long time interest in his heritage. Although his Taylor family recognized their Scotch-Irish heritage (see his Celtic toes at right), his introduction to this community at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in 1971 was a revelation. He said he had found "his people, his family."



Dick was 40 when he wore his new kilt and competed in Scottish heavy athletics for the first time. The caber toss, the 14 lb sheaf, the 28 lb hammer, 56 lb weight for distance.

The next year Dick looked at his competitor in Scottish Wrestling, an arms length away, with three first place wrestling medals from Clemson, and decided he should retire. He assisted with judging and helped co-worker Clyde McLean with announcing. His voice was heard regularly from the field or the review stand at Highland games in Glasgow Ky, Gatlinburg and Waxhaw but he served the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games for 30 years.



In 1992 Dick invited everyone he knew to invite everyone they knew to join him in organizing a Scottish society and a Highland games near Charlotte, NC. He wanted people to be able to enjoy the fun, camaraderie and fellowship he had found. Due to his illness he retired as president of that organization in 2002 but continued to volunteer; doing what he could every day for the good of the games.



In that same year Dick retired from the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games. He was very proud to receive the Agnes McRae Morton Award in 2007. That year he sat on the reviewing stand all day both days. He loved Grandfather but it was the last time he could go.



In reading this biography it becomes obvious that the primary passion of his life revolved around friends as well as participation in the extended Scottish American community. Family is more than blood kin, family are the people in your life who want you in theirs. Dick has an extensive family of friends who will miss him.

He is also survived by Keets, his wife of 48 years; son Bryan Taylor; daughter Holly McDonald and her husband, David; grandchildren, Savannah McDonald, Cameron Taylor, Eilidh Taylor and Steven Taylor; great-grand children Faith and Emily and two sons from a previous marriage; Richard Steven Taylor and Robert Scott Taylor.

A Celebration of Life will be on March 21, 2015  
from 1-4 pm at the McDonald home on  
1702 Fairview Blvd, Winston-Salem, NC 27127.  
Scattering of ashes will be  
at a place and time to be determined later.

Memorials may be made on line or mailed in  
Memory of Richard H. Taylor  
to the Robert W. Groves, Jr. Endowment Fund  
to provide long-range support of the  
Grandfather Mountain Highland Games Inc.  
[www.gmhg.org](http://www.gmhg.org)

### **The Parting Glass**

Of all the money that e'er I had,  
I spent it in good company.  
And all the harm I've ever done,  
alas it was to none but me.  
And all I've done for want of wit  
to mem'ry now I can't recall;  
So fill to me the parting glass,  
Good night and joy be to you all.

#### **CHORUS**

[So] fill to me the parting glass  
And drink a health whate'er befalls  
And gently rise and softly call  
Good night and joy be to you all

Of all the comrades that e'er I had,  
They're sorry for my going away.  
And all my sweethearts that e'er I had,  
They'd wish me one more day to stay.  
But since it fell unto my lot,  
That I should rise and you should not,  
I gently rise and softly call,  
Good night and joy be to you all.