Taylor, Welton, 1919-

Alternative Names: Taylor, Welton, 1919-

Life Dates: November 12, 1919-November 1, 2012

Place of Birth: Birmingham, Alabama

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Bacteriologist

Biographical Note

A descendant of President Zachary Taylor, world-renowned scientist and educator Welton I. Taylor was born in Birmingham, Alabama on November 12, 1919. Shortly after his birth, Taylor's family moved to Chicago, where his performance at DuSable High School inspired local African Americans to sponsor his undergraduate education in bacteriology at the University of Illinois. Taylor served in the first all-African American division to enter into combat in World War II; the G.I. Bill enabled him to return to his alma mater to earn his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in bacteriology.

Taylor was appointed bacteriology instructor at the University of Illinois in 1948; he promptly discovered that common antibiotics could treat gas gangrene and tetanus, dangerous conditions that affected war victims. In 1954, the Chicago meatpacking firm Swift & Company recruited Taylor to tackle an outbreak of salmonella poisoning in baby food; he standardized his successful approach to this problem and exported it to labs worldwide. In subsequent years Taylor helped Chicago-area hospitals, healthcare organizations, and government agencies, address an array of health problems. On a sojourn abroad from 1961 to 1962, Taylor collaborated with prestigious
British and French scientists. Upon returning to the University of Illinois, Taylor developed methods of bacteria detection that the Food and Drug Administration relies on today. In 1985, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta named a bacterium, "Enterobacter taylorae", in honor of Taylor and a British colleague.

Taylor received numerous awards and grants, and his prodigious list of publications has been a continual source of influence scientists. In 1960, Taylor founded the Chicago chapter of the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity, which he remained very active in. Taylor also welcomed opportunities to lecture on recent health issues that concerned him, such as increases in STDs and HIV. Taylor and his wife, Jayne, whom he married in 1945, raised two daughters, Karyn and Shelley.

Welton Taylor passed away on November 1, 2012.

Related Entries

Brewer, Millie [GRANDCHILDOf]
   Grandmother

Brewer, Buchanan [GRANDCHILDOf]
   Grandfather

Enslen, Frederick [GRANDCHILDOf]
   Grandfather

Hanna, Mary Blanche [SIBLINGOf]
   Sister

Taylor, Paige J. [NEPHEWOf]
   Uncle

Kemp, Jayne [SPOUSEOf]
   Wife

Handy, William Christopher [CousinOf]
   Cousin

Taylor, Shelley Patrice [PARENTOf]
   Daughter

Taylor, Karyn Jayne [PARENTOf]
   Daughter

Taylor, Jayne [SPOUSEOf]
   Wife

Taylor, Karyn [PARENTOf]
Daughter

Taylor, Shelley [PARENTOF]

Daughter

Brewer, Cora Lee [CHILDOF]

Mother

Taylor, Frederick Enslen [CHILDOF]

Father

Austin O. Sexton Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

Peoria Central High School [STUDENTOF]

Du Sable Leadership Academy [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1937]

Diploma

University of Illinois [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to 1941-06-09]

World Health Organization [EMPLOYEEOF]

University of Illinois, Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1948 to 1954]

Swift and Company [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1954 to 1959]

Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1959 to ?]

Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity [ESCRU] [MEMBEROF]

Founder and President