



Taylor Alumni Association Newsletter

April 2025

WHERE ARE THEY NOW??

We would like to make this a regular feature in our newsletter. Won't you send us "your story?" We would love to share it! Email the Alumni Association: tayloralumniassociation@yahoo.com.

The following information was received from Ken McCage. Ken is a lifelong Taylor resident who graduated from Taylor Center High School in 1962. Some of his artwork is included in this article.

In February of 1963, Ken enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was trained in New Jersey in telecommunications and assigned to the Pentagon. However, due to staffing issues he soon was reassigned to the East Coast Relay Station in Frederick, Maryland. This facility received and processed all U.S. Army messages from Europe and the East Coast of the United States and forwarded them to the Pentagon. 6 months later Ken was transferred to Fort Greely outside of Delta Junction, Alaska.



Ken with 2 of his grandchildren



Fort Greely is over 300 miles north of Anchorage and one of the most northern posts of our military. Temperatures routinely reach 60 degrees below zero. The Fort was a missile base and home to the U.S. Army Arctic Training Center. Personnel were required to complete an indoctrination program which involved survival techniques including vehicle operation, snowshoe usage and cross-country skiing under severe conditions.

Ken was assigned to the Signal Corp of the Fort and was responsible for the operation and maintenance of the telephone exchange system. Just a week before arriving at this new assignment, during the Easter weekend of 1964, Alaska and the northwest section of North American experienced one of the largest earthquakes on record. Ken saw firsthand the destruction caused by the quake. For several weeks after his arrival, he was able to feel the aftershocks of the quake.

Fort Greely also afforded Ken access to some of the most beautiful areas of our country. From grasslands to mountain ranges with wildlife ever present. One of the most interesting was the buffalo that roamed the area. As an experiment during the 1920's biologists relocated buffalo from Montana to the area near Delta Junction. This was to introduce the species to the arctic to see how they fared in the subzero temperatures. By the 1960's they had thrived. A cannon shot was used for reveille at the Fort each morning. Ken observed that the cannon shot not only was a signal for the Fort personnel but also caused the buffalo to begin their day as well.



Valdez, Alaska was a recreation area used by Fort personnel. About 300 miles south of Fort Greely, Valdez was dealing with flooding damage caused by the tidal wave that resulted from the earthquake. However, it remained a popular location for personnel to visit. Valdez is located on Prince Willam Sound where Ken was able to fish while enjoying the coastline many times.

After 12 months at Fort Greely, Ken received a new assignment as staff photographer. Fort Greely had its own newspaper as well as television and radio programs. Ken soon found himself at all the events and news stories that involved the Fort. Many times, his photos were picked up by Anchorage and Fairbanks news outlets. Ken completed 18 months at Fort Greely and was discharged in December of 1965 at the rank of Specialist E4.

Returning to Taylor, Ken realized he had a talent for layout and design of objects. He was soon hired by the Chrysler Corporation as a clay modeler for the advanced design studio where he worked on various new car models that would not see production for 7 years. After 3.5 years with Chrysler, Ken found a position closer to Taylor with the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn where he again worked in advanced design. Then in December 1969 American Motors bought the Jeep brand. A new design studio opened in Highland Park and Ken was lured away from Ford to this new facility. Unfortunately, the oil embargo of 1973 disrupted vehicle design and Ken was laid off. By this time Ken was married with two children and decided he needed more stable employment. Not wanting to leave the vehicle business he took a sales position at Ray Whitfield Ford. This proved to be a wise decision since Ken remained at Ray Whitfield Ford until he retired as the new car sales manager in 2006.



Since retirement Ken enjoys his friends and relatives, especially his 6 Grandchildren and 1 Great Grandchild. He has also found an outlet for his artistic design. Ken enjoys painting wildlife and outdoor scenes. He has exhibited many of his paintings at various art fairs and exhibitions in Wyandotte and Southgate. He has also volunteered at the Taylor Schools Alumni Museum. Ken also still keeps in touch with Ray Whitfield. In fact, you can sometimes find Ray and Ken enjoying lunch at a Taylor eatery!

DOWN MEMORY LANE
Eureka Heights being built 1951
25125 Eureka Rd. (Closed in 2024)

THE NEW EUREKA HEIGHTS BUILDING



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF YOUR BOARD OF EDUCATION

The School District of Taylor Township has this new building under construction. It will be completely modern in every respect and will represent an investment of \$228,000, exclusive of the land. This is an investment which will pay dividends for many years to come. It will permit a better educational program to be carried on in our school system.

No community can grow and prosper without a good public school system and without the backing and cooperation of the residents.

The site for this new elementary school was selected only after careful study of the educational needs of the southern section of the Township. The school is designed to embody a modern approach to elementary education. This design incorporates toilet and lavatory facilities for each classroom through 3rd grade as well as work and storage space in each room through the 8th grade.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I wish to thank the P.T.A. groups, Mothers' Clubs, parents, citizens, Dr. Fred C. Fischer and staff as well as the Superintendent of Schools, Administrative Assistant, Principals, teachers and all the non-teaching personnel whose very fine cooperation and loyal attitude has contributed to this year of progress.

Clarence Randall, President

IMPORTANT NOTICE - ALUMNI DIRECTORY UPDATE

We're excited to team up once again with PCI (Publishing Concepts) to put together a new alumni directory! The last time we did this was 2020, and it's time for an update. This project helps us stay connected and ensures we have the most up-to-date contact info for our alumni.

You get to decide what information is included, and there's no obligation to buy anything. That said, the directory is a great publication featuring alumni from all our high schools—past and present!

Be on the lookout for a postcard, email, or call from PCI sometime starting March 17, asking you to confirm your details. If you don't get anything, no worries! You can call PCI's dedicated Taylor Alumni line at 866-441-5581 or email them at PCIservice@publishingconcepts.com, and they'll send you a personalized link.

If you order a directory or package but later change your mind, you can cancel by calling PCI's customer service at 1-800-982-1590 or emailing PCIservice@publishingconcepts.com—they'll be happy to help. And if you run into any issues, reach out to us at tayloralumniassociation@yahoo.com.

Thanks for staying connected with the Taylor Alumni Association! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at: tayloralumniassociation@yahoo.com.

Taylor School District Alumni Association Board

Taylor Foundation of Educational Excellence

Taylor Schools Education Foundation Presents

Wall of Fame Honorees

John Pantalone:

- Part of the Taylor School District for 38 years
- Assistant Principal at Kennedy High School for 22 years
- Principal at Taylor Career Center for 6 years
- Founding member of the Taylor Public School Education Foundation
- Active member of the TPSEF for 39 years
- Sponsored multiple scholarships for graduating students from the Taylor Career Center

Loren Ristovski:

- Taylor High School Athletic Director for 17+ years
- Sponsored scholarships for years awarded to 1 male and 1 female graduating student athlete.
- Rejuvenated the elementary school basketball program, Bitty Ball
- Spent countless volunteer hours supporting the athletic programs.
- Spent countless hours helping to support student athletes to succeed in sports and in class and feed and clothe them.

April 25, 2025
6:00–9:30 pm
Lakes of Taylor Banquet Hall
25505 Northline Road
Taylor, MI 48180

Contact and QR code for Tickets

<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/2025-wall-of-fame-gala>
Kimber Dorton
734-673-5714

Taylor Public School Foundation for Educational Excellence is a registered 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization

100% of all funds raised will go to the Taylor Education Foundation to fund teacher grants and special projects for the students of Taylor Public Schools.



**Taylor Public School Foundation for Educational Excellence
Inaugural Wall of Fame Gala - Spring 2025**

TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOL FOUNDATION
FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- BOARD OFFICERS**
Kimber Dorton,
President
City of Taylor
- Armando Sardanopoli
Vice President
- Marsha Bettinger
Treasurer
- Linda Newsome
Secretary
- DIRECTORS**
Tanya Clayton
Scholarship Chair
- Ryan Meharry
Alumni Chair
- Nancy Acker
Community Advocate
- Pastor Ryan Bettinger
Northline Church
- Deus Bukonya
Rotary Club of Taylor
- Simone Calvas
Beaumont Health
- Rhonda Dana
Community Advocate
- Charlene Edelson
Community Advocate
- Justin Ford
Community Advocate
- Dorene Green
V.P. DFCU Taylor
- Blaine Honeycutt
Community Advocate
- Lisa Rutledge
Community Advocate
- Cindy Whittico
Community Advocate
- HONORARY MEMBERS**
Randy Fritz
Fritz Enterprises
- Kenneth Nelson
Sch. Chair Emeritus
- John Pantalone
Alumni Chr Emeritus
- Angie Winton
Councilwoman
- Mayor Tim Woolley
City of Taylor
- Larry Wright
Wright's Landscaping
- Michelle Matney
Downriver Comm Conf

Dear Friend of Taylor Schools and Community,

We hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of the Taylor Public School Education Foundation, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your support of the Taylor community. Whether your business is located within our city or operates here from out of state, your presence and activities significantly contribute to our economic stability and provide invaluable support to local families and students. We are deeply appreciative.

The Taylor Public School Foundation is a [501\(c\)3 nonprofit](#) organization that was established in 1986. We are comprised of business and community volunteers that raise funds that would not otherwise be funded through the operating budget of the district. Our work is vital to the progress and success of the schools we serve, directly supporting a variety of educational programs throughout the Taylor school district, PreK through 12, to enhance the education of our students.

Thanks to business leaders like you, we have been able to award Educator Grants, provide exposure to Theater and Museums, and annually award Scholarships to graduating seniors. In the last 10 years, the foundation has awarded over \$415,000, including more than \$300,000 in scholarships and more than \$115,000 towards grants and projects, mostly due to donor and sponsor engagement.

On April 25, 2025, the Taylor Public School Education Foundation will hold its very first Signature Gala Event! We are excited to have Michigan State Senator Erika Geiss as our keynote speaker and look forward to an evening of celebrating excellence in the Taylor School District. The Gala will be held at the renowned Lakes of Taylor Golf Course, where we will host community leaders, business owners, and school administrators of the downriver districts.

We invite you to join us as we celebrate our educators, alumni and community advocates at our Wall of Fame event. We're asking that you sponsor support through advertising, purchasing tables, and/or attendance. If your corporation is not local, your sponsorship funds can be used to host teachers and deserving district employees at your advertised table. We greatly need your support to further our mission of providing supplementary support to our students and teachers. Whether local or out of state, your support of this event is pivotal to our success.

Sponsorship Levels

[Each ticket includes dinner, beverages, and door prize raffles. Details on Event Flyer](#)

Platinum Sponsor - \$5000 (2 tables, Prominent Signage/Logo Placement, Web/Soc. Media)

Gold Sponsor - \$2500 (1 table, Signage: Bar/Raffle/Entrance/Program, Soc. Media)

Silver Sponsor - \$1000 (1 table, Signage: Raffle/Entrance/Program, Soc Media)

Bronze Sponsor - \$500 (4 tickets, Signage: Main Entrance/Program)

Table Sponsor - \$400 (1 table of 8 tickets)

Contact: Kimber Dorton 734.673.5714 taylorfoundation@taylorschools.net

Electronic Donations: <https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/2025-wall-of-fame-gala>

Donation Checks Written To:

Taylor Public School Foundation, 13500 Pine St., Taylor, MI 48180

Visit Our Website for Event Details: <https://taylorschoolsfoundation.org/events/>



**JFK Class of 1973
70th Birthday Bash**

Date: Saturday, May 17, 2025
Location: Whiskey on the Water
2903 Biddle Ave
Wyandotte MI 48192
Time: Open at 6pm
Dinner at 7pm
Cost: \$40 per person
With a Cash Bar



Due to some individuals having hearing issues, we plan to have 1970's music playing softly from 6-9pm. After this the tables will be removed, and a DJ will set up to dance. At 9pm the area will be open to the general public BUT if the room is full of 70-year-olds and we convince the DJ to keep playing music for us, the room may still be ours.

Currently dinner will be a buffet with, Whiskey Glazed Salmon, Chicken Piccata, Angus Roast Beef, Sides of Caesar Salad, Garlic Red Skin Mashed Potatoes and Asparagus. Dessert of Birthday Cake. Coffee, Tea and Soft drinks included.

Checks for the number of individuals in your group can be sent to: Diana Vinco at 5036 Bullard Road Fenton, MI 48430 or Karen Salomone at 5333 Sylvan Point RD, Honor, MI 49640 or Venmo payment can be sent to @ Karen-Salomone

Please include the names of the people so we can make name tags for all. Questions can be posted here or at Kennedy1973reunion@gmail.com See you there. Take care

Taylor Center and Truman, Class of 1975 reunion

50th Class Reunion for Taylor Truman and Taylor Center High Schools.

From the class of 75 Reunion Committee:

Save the date Saturday, October 18, 2025 @ Lakes of Taylor Golf Club Banquet Center. Also planning to meet at Pia's Pizzeria on Friday, October 17, 2025, for a little get together.

More information to follow soon. Please pass this information on to any classmates of Truman and TC you may still be in contact with. Include your maiden name and high school you attended.

We are also trying to get an idea of how many people are interested in attending this event on October 18, 2025. Please list how many people will be attending.

Respond to: classof75taylormi@gmail.com

Taylor Center, Class of 1965 Reunion

Join us for our 60th class reunion on Saturday, October 25, 2025, at Taylor Meadows Golf Club on Ecorse Road in Taylor. Expect a sit-down dinner and a chance to reconnect with old friends. Further details, including ticket cost, menu selection, and other information, will be provided soon. If you have a picture pin badge from previous reunions, please bring it along. We look forward to seeing you there!

ALUMNI LIFETIME MEMBERS

Want to become a lifetime member? It is only \$25. See the form at the end of this newsletter.

Daniel Spiceland – Taylor Center 1972



OBITUARIES

The Alumni Association members would like to extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the former classmates mentioned below. You will forever be in our thoughts and prayers. Please Note: If you know of a deceased graduate that is not listed in the Memoriam section of our website, please let us know the name, school, graduating class and date of passing.

Taylor Center

Richard DeLisle – Class of 1960 (4-25-2022)
Kenneth “Ken” Petry – Class of 1963 (3-10-2025)
James M. Lee – Class of 1979 (3-17-2025)
Anthony Hardin – Class of 1987 (3-22-2025)
Cheryl Keating Huffman – Class of 1984 (3-23-2025)
Phillip Mitchell – Class of 1963 (4-4-2025)

Kennedy

Sharon Golembiewski Berryhill – Class of 1981 (3-23-2025)

Truman

Tracy Walters Begley – Class of 1991 (3-25-2025)

Staff/Faculty

Joseph Lile – Teacher throughout district ending career at Truman (3-21-2025)
Richard “Dick” Kozik – Teacher, Coach, and Class advisor (3-11-2025)
Phillip Mitchell – Teacher (4-4-2025)

For more information about the deceased and their families, please visit tayloralumni.org In Memoriam

Alumni Association



Taylor School District

Taylor School District Alumni
Association
11501 Beech Daly
Taylor, MI 48180

Visit us online:
www.tayloralumni.org

Email us:
tayloralumniassociation@yahoo.com

Facebook:
TaylorMichiganAlumniAssociation

Taylor Alumni Association Board

President:	Caroline (Craddock) Patts (TC 73)
Vice Pres TC	Judith (Barnhart) LaFleur (TC 65)
Vice Pres JFK	Kenneth Renner (JFK 70)
Vice Pres HST	Shawna (Stein) Maynard (HST 90)
Vice Pres THS	OPEN POSITION
Secretary:	Sheri (Graham) Engelbrink (HST 77)
Treasurer:	Nancy Miller (JFK 67)
Past President:	Mary (Swartout) Rusnak (JFK 72)

Alumni Association Purpose

To enhance the educational atmosphere of the Taylor School District by developing an active alumni association for the common good of both the graduates and the school district.

Taylor School District Alumni Association Application for Membership

Alumni lifetime membership: \$25 per person.
Please print clearly:

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Maiden _____

School Attended _____

Graduation year _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

email _____

Make checks payable to:

Taylor School District Alumni Association

Mail this form along with your payment to:
Taylor School District Alumni Association
11501 Beech Daly, Taylor, MI 48180

Benefits of your lifetime membership:

Monthly newsletter

Website

Facebook page for info

email notices

Class reunion information

Alumni Museum

Social get togethers

Scholarship donations