



TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATE HIGHLIGHT



We recently found an article written in 1979 regarding Mitch Utterback's (JFK 79) experience with "Outward Bound". The program took place in the Cascade Mountains in Oregon. Challenges included rock climbing, rappelling, snow climbing, and a 3-day solo in the wilderness. We were interested to know what Mitch did after that experience. He was contacted by Ken Renner of your Alumni Association Board and here is his Mitch's response:

Reflecting back on the teachers who left a positive impression on me and were good influences, a few of them come to mind. You may recall these names, too.

At West Jr High, Coach Henry pushed me to be a better competitor in gymnastics. Mr. Dimitriou taught me about places in the world I later visited thanks to his inspiration. Mr. December showed me how fun history and exploration could be, and directly contributed to my path later in life.

At JFK High Frau Denchfield patiently taught me German for three years, and unbeknownst to her- or me, at the time - helped prepare me for military service in West Berlin. Mr. Furbush taught me the power of words, both spoken and in literature. Mr. Williams patiently mentored the Youth in Government program kids and helped us better understand how our government is supposed to work. Mr. Bennett awarded me a varsity letter in Track and Field - something I neither expected nor was striving for, and his gesture taught me about recognizing and rewarding people who contribute more to a team than shine themselves. Many of you reading this contributed to who I am today and I thank you for that. We are products of how and where we were raised. My classmates in Taylor Schools have left me a better person than I would have been, had I not met you.

Post high school, I attended Michigan Tech for three years and dropped out to join the Army, making it through Special Forces training a year after I went in. I continued my service on and off for 33 years, finally retiring with 20 years of active duty and a full retirement in 2015. Thanks to the Army, I completed a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, a master's in homeland security and another master's in journalism. All paid for by the Army or Veterans Administration. ...continued on page 2

Military service is one of the best ways a young person can prepare themselves for productive life, whether they do four years or stay in until 20 years and beyond.

I live in Boulder, Colorado and am there only half the year. Four times a year for a month at a time, I work in North Carolina as a contractor training Special Forces candidates in guerrilla warfare. Much of my summers are spent working on wildfires out west as a liaison officer on a federal incident management team. Both of these part-time gigs allow me to use the skills I've acquired in the military and serve a cause greater than myself.

I look forward to seeing some of you when I'm able to get back to Michigan - or let me know when you are in Colorado. I'm available on social media – [Mitch Utterback @Instagram](#)

WE RECENTLY HEARD FROM

Frank Kinsel, Graduate of TCH 1963

I was always interested in becoming a musician and practiced singing and playing guitar. After graduation I made an appointment to see Barry Gordy and walked into Hitsville USA and could not believe that also waiting for Gordy was Marvin Gaye. I played a couple of songs for Mr. Gordy and he said, "You are good -man; we can make a "soul" Bobby Darin out of you." With that encouragement, I moved to California and recorded my first song, "Cross the Western Plains". By 1969, Epic Columbia had me record my first album entitled "At Home" and distributed it in Europe and the USA.

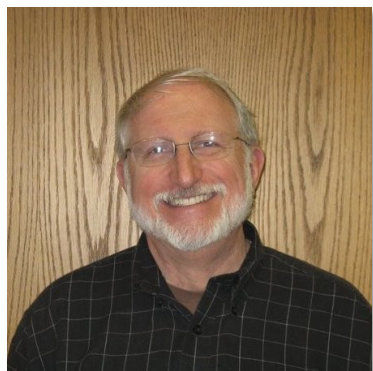


Along with my passion for music, I was interested in coins, antiques, and artifacts. I started collecting, buying, and trading. A friend of mine found a photo of Einstein taken by E Willard Spur, autographed by Einstein, himself. A big buy and bigger sale. I realized there could be a good living in this business. I bought a VW bus that I filled every day and sold my finds to antique dealers. I never lost interest in my music and continued to play and sing at home. After a long hiatus from studio recording, I started again in 2017 and released two albums. "Vocal Passage" was released in 2020.

Many pains were traveled during this voyage that became instrumental in my life. Difficult doing one's own bio, but for now, this is a story. Find your own true journey.

TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE GREAT TEACHERS

From Ron Sussman



I spent more than half of my life in Taylor Schools, and I retired 14 years ago. Teaching in Taylor was often full of surprises. I was hired as a Social Studies teacher, but, thanks to John Pantalone, my career took a significant and fortuitous lane change. J.P. had tried for years to get me to take over the Spanish department – to no avail. Then, in 1980 I was granted a sabbatical! Can you even imagine that? A Taylor teacher on sabbatical!

I traveled to Israel with my wife and two little kids with the promise I would return after the year and lecture to students, church groups and others about the educational system on an Israeli kibbutz. A kibbutz is a communal village where there is very little private ownership and a unique educational system.

While overseas, I received a snail airmail, which at that time still took over a week to arrive. In that letter was my schedule for the coming year. In addition to my usual assignments of American government, world history and economics, I discovered I would teach Spanish I, II, III and IV!! It had been 12 years since I sat in a Spanish classroom, but it was the best career change ever! Over the next 2 dozen years I had the blessing of working with the same students for as many as 4 years, preparing them for life in the Spanish-speaking world. Students learned Spanish for medical work, social work, police work, and travel. There were even students who prepared for, took, and passed the Spanish AP exam. And, at one time, I counted 12 Spanish teachers who came out of room 202!

In addition to teaching in Taylor for 37 years, I was able to teach at the University of Michigan for 6 years, managed a youth's summer camp for 35 years, and was an instructor and assistant to the Rabbi at Beth Israel for 27 years. I am now fully retired and am enjoying time with my family and my hobby working with glass and producing many items.

I have fond memories of all of the positions I have held but none compare with the memories of my time teaching at John F Kennedy High School. I have more than 3 dozen JFK yearbooks, and my closet is still filled with sweats, sweaters, shirts and even a jacket from JFK. I had the honor of representing Kennedy in the TFT for more than 3 decades and even served a term as the high school Vice President. My memories of teaching in Taylor are overwhelmingly positive and I treasure my ongoing relationships with Taylor teachers.

Enhance the educational atmosphere of the Taylor School District for both the graduates and the school district.

YOUR DONATIONS TO THE TAYLOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION AT WORK

The Foundation provided a night at the theater. On January 25, 2022, 63 drama, vocal music and instrumental students from Taylor High School were provided transportation and tickets to the Fisher Theater to see the musical “Hairspray”. For many students, this was their first experience seeing live theater, and for some it was even their first time in downtown Detroit. The event was organized by Renee Kuczeski, vocal music director at the High School and funded by your Taylor Public School Foundation with contributions made by you, the Alumni.

Donations from you are used for events like the theater outing, scholarships, support for club activities, special teacher projects and the like. The Foundation could not do all of this without your support.

Please consider making a donation. Make checks payable to: The Taylor Public Schools Foundation and include the name of high school attended and graduation year.

Mail checks to:
Taylor Public Schools Foundation
23633 Northline Rd
Taylor MI 48180

Some “Hometown” Information

by Caroline Patts, Alumni Association Board

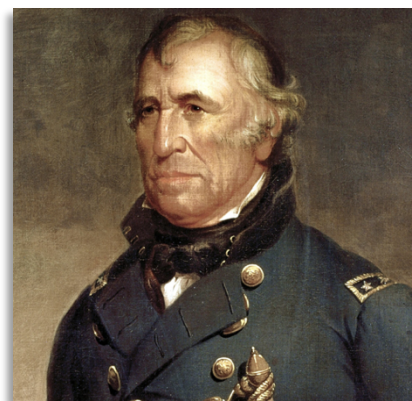
The founding of our hometown, Taylor, is being celebrated this year. On March 16, 1847, 135 years ago, Taylor was approved by the Michigan Legislature to become Taylor Township.

Augustus Coan, who settled here in 1820, was the first property owner. Augustus had four sons: Peter, Marlin, Edmund, and Elisha. In 1835, Augustus purchased 100 acres of land from the Federal Government. This area of land had been part of Ecorse Township. Peter and Edmund worked to clear the land to build log homes for their families. Eventually the Coans owned more than 630 acres of land in the new Taylor Township. ...continued on page 5

Enhance the educational atmosphere of the Taylor School District for both the graduates and the school district.

As the farmers in our area became more established, they were tired of having to travel 10 miles to the Village of Ecorse to vote and conduct other business. They petitioned the Michigan Legislature and on March 16, 1847, their petition to organize as Taylor Township was approved.

They chose that name as a tribute to the Mexican War hero Zachary Taylor, who would become the 12th President of the United States.



GOOD THINGS HAPPENING IN TAYLOR

Lake House Bar & Grille
Valentine's Day Dinner for Two

February 14th 5pm to 9pm
\$50 per Couple
Includes:
3 Course Meal and a
Bottle of Wine
Reservations Required
Call (734) 287- 9001

25505 Northline Road, Taylor, MI 48180



Appetizer Selections

Caesar Salad
Freshly chopped Romaine, shredded parmesan cheese and house made croutons tossed in Caesar dressing

French Onion Soup
Traditional beef stock and sweet onions topped with house made croutons and baked cheese

Spinach Artichoke Dip
Cheese, fresh spinach, and artichokes served with tortilla chips

Shrimp Cocktail
Jumbo Shrimp served with house made cocktail sauce

Entree Selections

Roasted Chicken
One half marinated roasted chicken served with Spätzle dumplings in made from scratch chicken gravy

Blackened Shrimp Fettuccine Alfredo
Fettuccine noodles tossed in creamy alfredo sauce topped with Blackened Jumbo Shrimp

Blackened Salmon
Served on a bed of wilted spinach with Rice Pilaf and Seasonal Vegetables

8 oz. New York Strip
Served with Baked Potato and Mixed Seasonal Vegetable

Desserts

Cookie Sundae
Fresh baked chocolate chunk cookie served with vanilla bean ice cream, streaked with chocolate syrup and topped with whipped cream

New York Cheesecake
Rich and creamy vanilla New York style cheesecake topped with strawberry compote

Red Velvet Cake
Rich red velvet cake topped with cream cheese icing and chocolate curls

Enhance the educational atmosphere of the Taylor School District for both the graduates and the school district.



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.

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

TAYLOR CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

- ✚ Jerry Downs, Class of 1957 (passed January 10, 2022)
- ✚ Gerald "Jerry" Zerbst, Class of 1960 (passed December 22, 2022)
- ✚ Robert "Bob" Cunningham, Class of 1960 (passed January 1, 2022)
- ✚ Larry Keck, Class of 1963 (passed January 22, 2022)
- ✚ Jerry Givens, Class of 1965 (passed October 5, 2021)
- ✚ Jacques E Ruhlman, Class of 1965 (passed December 16, 2021)
- ✚ Gerald C Burns, Class of 1969 (passed August 3, 2018)
- ✚ Jimmy D. Shupe, Class of 1974 (passed December 24, 2021)
- ✚ John Voran, Class of 1976 (passed January 19, 2022)
- ✚ Joseph Drum, Class of 1977 (passed July 26, 2021)
- ✚ Brian Wiska, Class of 1984 (passed January 10, 2022)

JOHN F KENNEDY HIGH SCHOOL

- ✚ Norma Cagle Frick, Class of 1966 (passed May 2020)
- ✚ Brenda Baugh Kittle, Class of 1967 (passed January 6, 2022)
- ✚ Richard Groff, Class of 1968 (passed December 1, 2021)
- ✚ Christopher "Chris" Long, Class of 1968 (passed December 25, 2021)
- ✚ Fred Lang, Class of 1971 (passed January 15, 2022)
- ✚ Charles "Chuck" Gibson, Class of 1976 (passed January 10, 2022)

HARRY S TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL

- ✚ Kenneth Curtis, Class of 2015 (passed January 5, 2022)

STAFF

- ✚ Theresa Krause, elementary teacher at Kinyon (passed December 5, 2021)
- ✚ Dale Avery, teacher, counselor, and administrator (passed December 21, 2021)
- ✚ Jerry Montecillo, superintendent (passed December 27, 2021)
- ✚ Richard Denman, teacher at West and JFK (passed December 27, 2021)
- ✚ Delphine Nutt, elementary teacher at Randall, Staff Development (passed January 1, 2022)
- ✚ Carol Meredith, teacher, consultant, and mentor (passed January 5, 2022)