

# Couple: Taylors Enter Area Politics, Become Elected

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In 1973, Taylor, a man from a poor but proud black North Carolina family who made a prosperous life for his family in Jamestown, earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from State College at Fredonia at the age of 50.

Taylor and his two children were college students at the same time for a while. His mother, Taylor proudly says, attended college and was a teacher.

In 1975, the year the Vietnam War ended, Taylor decided to run for a seat on the Jamestown City Council.

"Lula was my organizer," he said of the campaign.

Mrs. Taylor canvassed the neighborhood asking for votes for her husband. He won the election, much to his shock and disbelief.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Taylor, said she learned a lot through her work as a committeewoman for the Democratic Party and followed her beliefs.

"If I didn't think he was the best man for the job, I wouldn't have helped him," she said.

Taylor recalled that his wife once campaigned for the charismatic Jamestown politician, Louis Peterson.

"He ran against our dear friend and godfather to one of our children, but Lula wanted Peterson and he won," he said. "She's tough."

Shortly after, the first African American radio station was established and Alice Walker wrote *The Color Purple*, a movie the Taylors said they don't like because of its negative depiction of black men. The Taylors were blessed at the same time with the birth of their first grandson, Michael.

Their daughter, Michael's mother, lost her eyesight at the age of 22 and went back home to her parents with her son. In their 50s, the Taylors took the responsibility of raising the boy, with his mother's blessings.

They saw to his needs, including trips to Buffalo's Roswell Park Cancer Research Hospital for his weeklong treatments for the bone cancer he battles.

Democratic Party, but could never seem to get any of them elected to the legislature," she said. "So, for the first time, I campaigned for myself and I won. I just told the people that I would work hard."

Shortly after her win, the legislator was thrilled to be the guest speaker at graduation ceremonies for her high school in North Carolina.

Last year, the Taylors ran again for their city and county political seats. Vivian had retired from the job in 1995 and had been reappointed by Mayor Richard Kimball two years later to fill a vacancy.

Mrs. Taylor sought re-election as an incumbent. They both won, again to Taylor's shock and disbelief.

"I just didn't believe we'd both do it again," he said.

For 50 years, the Taylors said they have worked hard for the city of Jamestown. They have touched more committees, boards, organizations, events, programs, projects and services that can be named.

In 1997, Vivian was honored by the city with the Benjamin C. Spitale Lifetime Achievement Award, named for the late community and labor leader, and is featured in a chapter of Roland Kidder's book, *A Hometown Went To War*, for his military experiences.

Mrs. Taylor is serving her ninth year in the legislature. She has served on the board of Safe House for run away teens; is the founder of the Ebony Task Force; and has served on a variety of committees including Public Works, Off-Track Betting, Physicians Recruitment and Reachout Ministries.

They began their political careers talking about economic opportunities, race relations, programs for youth and the importance of representing the people of their respective districts.

Last month, Mrs. Taylor commented during a full legislature session that a letter received and read by the clerk be noted and made a part of the official record.

Though she did not submit