

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with William Taylor

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Taylor, William, 1930 December 24-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | September 13, 2003                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2003                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:58:00).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Federal government administrator and public relations manager William Taylor (1930 - 2019) served as the Director of Defense Information for the U.S. Army, and has worked as an advisor to the oil industry. Taylor was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 13, 2003, in Silver Spring, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2003_241                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Colonel William M. Taylor helped the U.S. military manage media scrutiny in times of crisis for twenty-seven years. Born on December 24, 1930, in St. Paul, Minnesota, Taylor's media savvy served him and his country well as the military officer responsible for public affairs support to the secretary of defense.

Taylor grew up in Muncie, Indiana, and earned a journalism degree from Indiana University in 1952. He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1953 and soon after began working in public information posts for the Air Force. During the Vietnam War, Taylor was a public information officer stationed in Saigon, Vietnam, and Bangkok, Thailand. When he returned to the United States, Taylor worked at the Pentagon, and in July 1977 became the director of defense information. During his tenure, Taylor helped manage publicity for the military on a number of sensitive issues, from missing nuclear bombs to returned prisoners of war to the failed Iranian hostage rescue.

After retiring in 1980, Taylor became a public affairs adviser to the American Petroleum Institute. He served as a contact person for media on the oil industry and helped manage public awareness for petroleum issues. For eight years, Taylor organized and managed the oil industry's annual crisis management and communications seminar. This expertise became invaluable in 1989, when Taylor went to Alaska to provide on-site assistance to Exxon in the aftermath of the Valdez oil spill. Beginning in 1996, Taylor ran Action Image, a public relations consultancy and sports photography enterprise. He also served as a public affairs emergency response reservist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Taylor and his wife, Phyllis Moxley, had three children and three grandchildren.

Taylor passed away on September 14, 2019.

Colonel William M. Taylor was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 13, 2003.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with William Taylor was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 13, 2003, in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Federal government administrator and public relations manager William Taylor (1930 - 2019) served as the Director of Defense Information for the U.S. Army, and has worked as an advisor to the oil industry.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Taylor, William, 1930 December 24-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Taylor, William, 1930 December 24- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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United States. Dept. of Defense

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United States. Dept. of Defense

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### Occupations:

Federal Government Administrator

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Public Relations Manager

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|PoliticalMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, September 13, 2003. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?  
Col. William Taylor details the backgrounds of his mother and father, explaining their family histories and how they met. He then talks about his eye-opening move from liberal-minded Minnesota to the conservative Indiana social scene where he experienced his first memory of race awareness. William Taylor reflects on his days as a child in Minnesota.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:30 ?  
Colonel William Taylor talks about the important role that the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center played in the St. Paul, Minnesota community. He then remembers black celebrities that he dealt with during one of his early jobs. Next, he reflects on his elementary school days and his life during that time in Muncie, Indiana. William Taylor explains his early interest in the study of World War II and Nazi Germany.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:05 ?  
Colonel William Taylor explains how he got interested in writing and various forms of communications. He gives an overview of his high school athletic career. Taylor talks about the college choices and how he decided on attending Indiana University. Next, he discusses his experiences as a student of journalism and goes into detail about his activity as a member of their track team. William Taylor recalls the start of his professional life.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:40 ?  
Colonel William Taylor talks about his decision to stay in the U.S. Air Force as opposed to taking a private position with a media source. Next, he details his travels with the military and describes experiences as a part of the Air Force Press Corps. Taylor describes other, non-military-related, jobs in public relations. The interview then shifts back to his military career and Taylor comments on being the highest-ranking African American in U.S Public Affairs. William Taylor recalls his military travels in Southeast Asia.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_005, TRT: 0:28:00 ?  
Colonel William Taylor recalls catastrophic events in recent history that he has been involved in because of his career in media relations. He then talks about his ideas in preserving the stories of African Americans that have direct relationships with slaves. William Taylor reflects on the state of the black community and considers his legacy.
- Video Oral History Interview with William Taylor, Section A2003\_241\_001\_006, TRT: 0:28:45 ?  
Colonel William M Taylor narrates pictures from his youth, his military career and family life.