

NELSON E. TAYLOR, JR. (continued)

Federal-College Internship Program.

More recently, Ned edited a book on American parties and politics, entitled "Know Your Candidates." This was an analysis in their own words of the positions of Vice-President Nixon and Senator Kennedy on major policy issues. In addition, he had been asked to contribute a chapter to a commemorative volume in honor of Eric Voegelin, an outstanding contemporary political theorist and Ned's colleague on the faculty at Louisiana State University. During the recent political campaign, Ned worked as director of research and as writer for Gore Vidal, the unsuccessful candidate for Congress in New York's 29th District.

At the time of his death, Ned was revising his doctoral dissertation with a view to publication. This was a study of the American Association of Railroads as a pressure group. In fact, Ned made a hobby of railroads; he was what is called a true railroad buff.

In his years at Vassar, Ned developed into a fine teacher. There was nothing of the pedant or the antiquarian about him and his classes were alive with stimulating presentation and exciting response. Ned had no file of last year's notes, no yellowed sheets of ancient lectures. Like a good teacher, he strove to make his students think; in the process of doing so, he sometimes exaggerated, he sometimes needled, he sometimes assumed the role of the devil's advocate. But there was point to all that he did in the classroom. In time, the facts might be forgotten, the theories dim recollections, but the students would never forget the intellectual experience that comes of the challenged mind, of new and unexpected ways of looking at social problems, of driving the student back upon the truth or falsity of her basic assumptions.

Not only did his students hold him in high esteem as a teacher; their regard for him was genuinely affectionate.

Ned's scholarship was acknowledged by students, faculty colleagues at Vassar and in the profession, to be of the highest calibre. His opinions and judgments—sometimes tenaciously held and vigorously expressed—derived from painstaking research and wide reading, both in his chosen field and in related fields. His own depth of knowledge in his field and other fields that interested him, such

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1921 - 1960

Nelson E. Taylor, Jr., died suddenly in the early morning of November 12, 1960. He was a young man, he anticipated with assurance a promotion to the associate professorship, he was within sight of a major scholarly publication, he had developed into an able and stimulating teacher, and he felt that

at last he had found a place in which to sink his roots. There was, so it would seem, a long, happy and fruitful life ahead. But this was not to be. If it may be said, as it can be said, that the College feels deeply the loss of one who served so well, we in the Department of Political Science feel his loss doubly. To say that we shall never find another like him is merely to say that we are none of us alike. But to say that the department needed a man of Ned's particular individuality, and that because of his particular individuality the department was a better department, brings home to us the nature of our loss.

Ned was born in Baltimore on May 24, 1921, the only son of Mrs. Nelson E. Taylor and the late Mr. Taylor. He graduated and went on to take the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at Harvard. Ned was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the American Political Science Association, the American Society for Public Administration, and the Southern Political Science Association. Ned Taylor joined the Vassar faculty in 1954. Earlier, he had taught at Tufts College, Louisiana State University, and the University of Vermont.

In the summer of 1957, Ned worked on two studies for the New York State Temporary Commission on the Constitutional Convention, which was established by the legislature in preparation for a forthcoming constitutional convention. One of these was in the nature of a report on the needs to the office of governor and the structure of the State's administrative organization.

In the summer of 1958, Ned directed the joint Wellesley-Vassar Summer Intern Program in Washington. In 1959, he was elected secretary of the Vassar faculty. In the same year, he was appointed coordinator for Vassar of the

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as theology, served as a model to the students in his ceaseless efforts to bring them up to the highest scholarly level of which they were capable.

Ned was fundamentally a conservative with a liberal bent. The day before he died he expressed a deep suspicion of reformers and their ways. His thought was always in the realm of the possible; his interest was in reasonable and sensible steps forward within the context of the American constitutional system unhampered by the claims of special groups or the concepts of doctrinaire theorists. He was very much the descendant of both Jefferson and Hamilton. Behind a facade, reminiscent of one of Ned's favorite writers, H.L. Mencken, there was a very thoughtful and kindly person. He was a loyal and devoted friend who did not give his friendship lightly, but once given it could be depended upon. He was an extremely courteous person to whom the amenities were important.

He had a nice quality of quietly doing little kindnesses and of making the recipient feel that the pleasure was really his. His elderly landlady, in whom Ned inspired both affection and admiration, had this to say: "I have never met a young man who was so considerate and who appealed to me so much. I cannot begin to tell you the kind and thoughtful things he has done for my sister and myself. The whole place is different and better since he came here to live."

Not only was he a kindly person, he was a lonely person. There often appeared to be a defensive facade, but this was a bulwark of an extremely sensitive person who was easily hurt. On two or three occasions we had discussed the insensitivity of sensitive people to the sensitivities of others. Ned knew his own faults and sought to correct them and to a great extent he succeeded; but he never overcame a loneliness which was more extreme than the loneliness most of us experience.

At the end of his life, however, he had two associations which were constant sources of strength. One was the church the other the department.

Ned was a deeply religious man. Raised a Methodist, he became greatly interested in the Episcopal Church. He was confirmed and became a member of Christ Church in Poughkeepsie. Not only was he a regular attendant at this church

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and a full participant in its activities, he was a lay reader and assumed his obligations very seriously.

Along with deep involvement in the activities of the church, Ned had wide-ranging cultural interests. He loved good music and derived intense pleasure from his large record collection and the numerous musical performances he attended on the campus and in New York City. He was no less interested in drama, expressing this interest both by participating from time to time in campus dramatic productions and by going to the theater frequently. He also attended a great many lectures, symposia, and conferences on the campus and elsewhere, and he was heard to comment frequently about how these experiences had broadened his horizons. These varied cultural activities greatly enriched his teaching and made Ned a stimulating conversationalist.

In every sense, Ned was a full and complete member of the Department of Political Science. He was a responsible person upon whom we could rely with utmost confidence; his counsel was welcome and of value. Among us all, there was a mutual trust, respect, and liking; but through long years of association, both Mr. Crabb and the chairman can testify to Ned's great contribution to the affairs of the depart-

ment, and we particularly will note his absence.

And so we say good bye to Ned Taylor: a fine teacher, a good friend, a respected and valued member of the Vassar community.

In view of Ned's profound interest in the classics, it is appropriate that we should end this memorial with a quotation from Plato:

"Certainly not," said Socrates. "The soul of a philosopher will reason in quite another way; she will not ask philosophy to release her in order that when released she may deliver herself up again to the thrallldom of pleasures and pains, doing a work only to be outdone again, weaving instead of unweaving Penelope's web. But she will calm passion, and follow reason, and dwell in contemplation of her, beholding the true and divine (which is not a matter of opinion), and thence deriving nourishment. Thus

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she seeks to live while she lives, and after death she hopes to go to her own kindred and to that which is like her, and to be freed from human ills. Never_ fear, Simias and Cobes, that a soul which has thus been nurtured and has had these pursuits, will at her departure from the body be scattered and blown away by the winds and be nowhere and nothing."

Martha McChesney Wyman

Cecil V. Crabb, Jr.

C. Gordon Post

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