

CECIL GRADY TAYLOR

Cecil Grady Taylor possesses that rare combination of academic and human talents that coalesce to produce top-flight university administrators: as first Chancellor of the Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge he guided its rise to eminence. Born in Williamston, he was graduated from this institution more than half a century ago, Phi Beta Kappa. His Master's and Doctor's degrees were awarded here also and he taught here before going to Baton Rouge. At LSU he gained a reputation as a teacher who cared about excellence, then as a Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences who successfully strengthened many programs and gave especial attention to an Honors Program. He became Chancellor in 1965.

In that post, Dr. Taylor guided LSU during troubled times when the people--and legislatures--tended to lose faith in higher education and to reduce their support. With persistence and dedication, with intelligence, common sense, integrity, and an infectious sense of humor as well, Chancellor Taylor established a rapport of an unusual character with students, faculty, and the citizens of Louisiana. Tireless in pressing for new programs and in improving the liberal arts core of his university, "Pete" Taylor was never too busy for students or faculty colleagues. He listened to their problems, and with sensitivity, perceptiveness, and an essential kindness that is part of the man, responded in the best ways possible.

For his efforts in the area of French language and culture, Dr. Taylor was decorated by the French government with the Palmes Académiques; his leadership in University administration is reflected in the important positions he has held in the major academic and accrediting agencies. Since retirement he has worked effectively as a valued member of the Board of Supervisors of Southern University in Baton Rouge, and he has revitalized the Friends of the Library at LSU to strengthen that essential center of university life. The University takes pride in the illustrious career of this distinguished alumnus.