

Devoted to family, faith, world

By Michele Lynn, The Herald-Sun

March 27, 2004 7:56 pm

CARRBORO -- Pat Taylor cares about her community. And her definition of community is very broad.

It includes her family-- her husband, Duane, and their seven children, ranging in age from 39 to 52.

There is her faith community, Newman Catholic Student Center Parish, which she serves as a Eucharistic minister.

Then there is the UNC community, where she was the purchaser for the Department of Physics and Astronomy for more than 25 years.

And there is the larger community, which has benefited in countless ways from Taylor's volunteerism. When her children were younger, Taylor was active with a number of groups including the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and PTA.

She still volunteers with young people, working each week on reading-readiness skills with four Carrboro Elementary School students.

The Inter-Faith Council has also been the recipient of much of Taylor's generosity of time and spirit. Taylor has served on the board of directors, worked as an overnight volunteer at the shelter, cooked and served in the community kitchen, acted as the receptionist for Community House and volunteered as a meal monitor. For years, she and volunteer Mike Frawley trained and scheduled all of the shelter's evening volunteers.

In recognition of this, Taylor received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service in 1998.

"I felt that there were certainly a lot of people in IFC that had worked as hard as I did and deserved to be recognized," she said in her typically modest way. "IFC has given me a wonderful opportunity to be with the other volunteers, the staff and the guests. We are blessed with our wonderful staff and so many giving people -- guests, staff and volunteers. Volunteering at IFC has made me realize that anyone could be in the situation of being a guest at [the shelter]. We're all just a paycheck away from being in that situation."

Frawley, whose own work was recognized with Taylor, said, "Pat is concerned about not just herself and her family but how the rest of the world is getting along."

Taylor said that her Catholic faith instilled in her the idea that you need to give back.

"The more you receive, the more you should be returning," said Taylor.

The Rev. Phillip Leach, Taylor's pastor at the Newman Catholic Student Center Parish, said, "Pat Taylor is a woman of deep faith. She is a prayer and a doer, which is kind of unusual. Some devote themselves to prayer, and that's a great thing. Some devote them just to acts of justice and charity, and that's a great thing. She has this gift to do both and to do them both well. She is multidimensional and multitalented."

Taylor also did her professional work well, according to Donna Braxton, the department manager at UNC's Department of Physics and Astronomy.

"The description that comes to my mind is devotion. She was always so concerned about the department's welfare," Braxton said. "Pat was such an invaluable asset to this department and the university as a whole. Pat was the type of employee that other employers coveted, and she was certainly revered by our department."

In recognition of her commitment, Taylor received the prestigious UNC Chancellor's Award in 1993. Taylor's modesty surfaces again when she said, "I received the award because I was fortunate to work for so many great people who were good enough and went to all the trouble to fill out the nomination forms. You always feel that there are lots of other people that have worked hard and deserve an award."

While that may be true, Leach said, "Pat Taylor is one of the most amazing women I have known in my entire life."

