

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Robert Taylor is an American journalist, novelist, and short story writer. He was born in Abilene, Texas, on July 22, 1940. His parents were Virginia Kerby Taylor and Larry Thornton Taylor.

Robert Taylor fell in love with reading at a young age, and this interest soon evolved to include a love for writing. After working on his high school newspaper, Taylor decided to major in journalism at Texas Technological College (now Texas Tech University), where he served as managing editor of the college newspaper. He graduated with high honors in 1962, earning the award for Outstanding Male Graduate in Journalism. During college, Taylor joined The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). After graduating, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in Army Intelligence. He graduated first in his class in Intelligence School and was then assigned to the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence at the Pentagon. Taylor served the required three years, but the war in Vietnam necessitated his continued service. After being promoted to First Lieutenant and later Captain, Taylor was sent to Vietnam in October of 1966, where he was assigned to the Intelligence staff of the Commanding General at Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam. During his time in the Army, Taylor constantly feared that his homosexuality would be discovered, which would have led to an automatic dishonorable discharge. Taylor completed his service without being discovered, and in the process earned a Bronze Star for Meritorious Service. However, after returning to Washington D.C. in October of 1967, he resolved never to live in fear of that kind again. Despite the political and social climate of intolerance and even hatred towards homosexuality, Taylor told his family, friends, and coworkers that he was gay. He has lived openly ever since.

In Washington D.C., Taylor worked as an editor for several publications produced by governmental and national organizations until 1986. During this time, he began his career as an activist for gay rights. In 1969, he joined the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), helping to organize petitions, boycotts, and letter-writing campaigns that targeted discriminatory policies on the basis of sexual orientation. In June of 1975, while handing out information on GAA at one of the first Gay Pride Day celebrations in Washington D.C., Taylor met Ted Nowick, a sculptor who studied at the Corcoran Gallery School of Art in Washington, and works in clay, marble, bronze, and cast resins. They have been together ever since, and were finally married on April 26, 2014, in Cooperstown, New York, just two months before their 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Taylor left his work as a magazine editor and began his career as an author of fiction in the fall of 1986, moving with Nowick to Blue Hill, Maine. Since that time, he has published four novels, a collection of short stories, and several essays, of which many have won awards (bibliography and awards listed below).

In addition to writing, Taylor continued his involvement in his community while living in Maine. He served on the Board of Trustees, as treasurer, and then as vice president, of the Pierre Monteux Memorial Foundation. Additionally, he was a member of the board of the Down East AIDS Network, and a member of the National Council of America Speaks Out.

## ROBERT TAYLOR PAPERS

In 2003, Taylor and Nowick moved to the Kendal at Oberlin retirement community in Oberlin, Ohio, where both continue their involvement in the arts through their own work and participation in the community. At Kendal, Taylor has served as president of the Kendal at Oberlin Residents' Association, and as a resident member of the Kendal at Oberlin's Board of Directors. He is the editor of *Eureka!*, a creative arts magazine published three times a year at Kendal. Outside of Kendal, Taylor has been an Affiliate Scholar of Oberlin College since approximately 2005. He serves on the Visiting Committee of the Allen Memorial Art Museum in Oberlin, and the Advisory Council of the Friends of the Oberlin College Library. He was elected president of that organization in November of 2015. Finally, he is a member of the Board of the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts.