

Leland Baridon Taylor
July 6, 1920 - June 14, 2020
Trustee Emeritus of the Cortland Free Library

2020 has been a year of forced separation for most, thanks to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

One of the events which was not able to occur was for the Cortland Community to honor, pay its respects and celebrate in a timely manner, the life of Leland Baridon Taylor, Lee to most of us.

This account will deal mainly with Lee's contributions to the Cortland Free Library.

We hear a lot about the need for term-limits.

Fortunately, there were no such restrictions in place during Lee's years of service to the Library! He was a vital, active and contributing Trustee for all of his 56 years and 8 months on the Board! (April 1951 – December 2007)

In the words of Library Director Emeritus Warren S. Eddy "He cared for the community. He gave many things and he was very quiet about it."

Lee Taylor was elected Board President in January of 1962 and served as secretary in 2007.

On behalf of the library, Lee was instrumental in working out the purchase of an apartment building next to the library to provide room for a much-needed parking lot.

Lee traveled to Albany to negotiate suitable terms for the Cortland Free Library to become a member of the Finger Lakes Library System.

When library funding was dependent upon the city's budget alone for operating funds, Lee worked to develop contracts with two nearby communities to increase financial support.

In a time when our society was less litigious, Lee was comfortable offering sage advice if the library was facing a legal issue.

Extensive research by Lee produced a written account of all bequests to the Cortland Library, noting in the donor's words, the requested disposition of the gifts. This document was and is instrumental in proper care of the library's endowment fund.

Even in "retirement", Lee kept the library's interests in mind. He and Rosemary, his wife of 75 years, would visit libraries when they traveled, then Lee would bring back ideas for the Cortland Free Library to consider. He never stopped observing and learning.

Lee's contributions to the library were not overlooked!

Upon his retirement as a Trustee in 2007 Leland Taylor was designated as Trustee Emeritus.

In 2011 the entrance to the newly renovated Youth Services was named in Lee's honor.

Lee's life was shaped by many things; graduation from Syracuse University, service in the Pacific Theatre during WWII, as a partner in the Fitzgerald and Taylor Law Firm and as a Cortland City Court Judge and member of the NY Bar Association plus many more community entities.

Lee's obituary summed it up. "Known for his strong principles and work ethic, his family and friends remember him best for his ready smile and his contagious laugh. He considered himself lucky to have survived the war and that, along with his upbringing, made him humble, caring and a devoted family man." I would add, COMMUNITY SERVANT."

Diane Moore Ames, October 16, 2020
CFL Trustee

The Board of Trustees has voted to purchase these three books for the library's collection in memory of Lee.

- The Fleet at Flood Tide (hardcover)
- The Fleet at Flood Tide (audiobook)
- Twilight of the Gods (hardcover)