



Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor

May 29, 2020

"It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog." It seems Rosey Taylor was always fighting his entire life – to be better, to be faster, and to reach higher.

Roosevelt Taylor, also known as "Rosey," was born July 4, 1937 in Eudora, AR. Born to the union of William Taylor and Savannah Mathis Taylor. His mother moved his sister and him to New Orleans when he was four years old and he remained a New Orleanian until his transition.

He was a graduate of Joseph S. Clark Senior High School in New Orleans, where he excelled in basketball, football and track. Rosey's athletic talents landed him a basketball scholarship to Grambling State University. However, when he arrived at Grambling there was no scholarship, but nothing would deter Rosey from attaining his dreams. He worked several jobs to pay for school and later tried out for the football team, led by the legendary Coach Eddie Robinson, who immediately recognized Rosey's natural athletic talents. Rosey embodied all of the traits that Coach Robinson required from his entire Grambling Tigers squad... to be "agile, mobile and hostile."

In 1961, he was signed as an undrafted free agent by the Chicago Bears. Taylor played 8½ of his 12 seasons with the Bears and was a part of the 1963 NFL championship team that had one of the great defenses in league history. He also played 2½ years with the San Francisco 49ers after the Bears traded him in the middle of the 1969 season and finished his career in 1972 with the "Over the Hill Gang" Washington Redskins.

Taylor, who ranked no. 43 on the Chicago Tribune's list of the Top 100 players in Bears' history last year, had 23 of his 32 career interceptions with the Bears. He had nine interceptions and three fumble recoveries in 1963, and his 12 takeaways are still tied for the single-season franchise record.

He was an All-Pro and Pro Bowl selection in 1963 and also was named to the Pro Bowl in 1968. Taylor played in eight career playoff games, though only one was with the Bears, and he ended his career by playing in Super Bowl VII in the Redskins' 14-7 loss to the Miami Dolphins.

In 1970 Taylor won the Eshmont Award, which is the 49ers' most prestigious annual honor. It is given each year to the Niner who best exemplifies the "inspirational and courageous play" of Len Eshmont, a player from the original 1946 Forty Niners' team. A few years later, he was among a group of athletes invited by President Nixon to the White House to participate in an anti-drug campaign.

Rosey Taylor was as soft-spoken off the field as he was hard-hitting on it. He had a well-deserved reputation as a gentleman's gentleman, and relished any and every opportunity to serve as a role model for young African-American men. It was a role he played perhaps even better than his role as a defensive back on the gridiron. He was motivated to give back because of the racial discrimination he faced throughout his life even as a professional athlete and even in his own beloved hometown.

Recognizing the lack of opportunities for underprivileged African American youth, Taylor envisioned a football camp for young males – long before anything as such was established in this area. As a strictly non-profit endeavor, he solicited donations from numerous civic minded clubs and organizations and set about to make his vision a reality.

With the help of a group of loyal friends, they established the "Rosey Taylor Football Camp". Because it was self-subsidized, he was only able to do it for one year... but the seed was planted. He also sponsored the Rosey Taylor

Relays in conjunction with his high school alma mater, Joseph S. Clark. The inspiration for these undertakings came from his first coach, Ralph Haynes, who took the time and attention to mentor young African American males. Many would say, Rosey, was an “everyman” hero. Following his retirement from football, Rosey enjoyed several other careers. He had a brief stint as a sports broadcaster on a local TV station with Buddy Diliberto. He also owned several businesses which spanned the New Orleans area, the Lake Charles area, as well as the Bay area. These businesses included a trucking company, a hotel, and several restaurants. But the most notable one would be a sports bar that he owned and operated for almost two decades; The Rosey Taylor Locker Room Lounge, which resided on St. Ann Street at the foot of the French Quarters not far from the Municipal Auditorium. Many sports fans, sports legends, New Orleanians, and tourists alike enjoyed spirits in the lounge which was decorated to resemble an actual football locker room. Rosey also was a community activist. He served as a Community Relations Liaison during Sheriff Harry Lee’s tenure. In this role he visited schools in the Jefferson Parish area and spoke to youth.

Rosey made his transition on May 29, 2020. Larger than life, generous to a fault, he was an amazing father, devoted husband, beloved grandfather and uncle. He will be dearly missed by his wife of almost 60 years, Claudia, his daughters Sherri Taylor - Los Angeles, Alicia Taylor Bard (Branville) - Cambridge, MA, Brian Taylor (Bernadette) - Buffalo, NY; four grandchildren, Edward Taylor, Brandyn Bard, Grant Taylor, Taylor Grace Bard and a host of nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his mother Savannah, father William, sisters Lee Aster Williams and Johnnie L. Walker.

In lieu of flowers please consider donating to Grambling Legends, in Roosevelt Taylor’s name. Donations can be sent to: The Grambling Legends, Inc. P.O Box 73436, Baton Rouge LA. 70874.

A private service will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at D. W. Rhodes Funeral Home at 3933 Washington Ave. New Orleans, LA. 70125.

Due to current extenuating circumstances, we ask that those who wish to express their condolences or share fond memories do so at www.rhodesfuneral.com

A public memorial service will be announced at a later date. The family is grateful for your understanding and compassion during this trying time.

Tribute Wall

CL

“ Dear Claudia
I just read of your sweet husband’s passing. You two were such a wonderful couple, you with your great sense of humor, and he a gentle giant with great muscles.
Your children are so fortunate to have you two smart amazing parents.
Challenging scrabble games with you will never be forgotten
Love always
Hug the girls for me!
Carole de Lay-Poree
Call anytime 210-396-0084

Carole de Lay-Poree - October 11, 2021 at 09:47 PM

JD

“ Claudia, please accept our heartfelt sympathy as I’ve just learned of your loss and Rosey’s passing. We deeply appreciated his, and your, Friendship; we were so very blessed to know Roosevelt. We are keeping you and your Family in our thoughts and prayers. John, Dolly, & Mark DiMaggio

John DiMaggio - July 15, 2020 at 09:35 AM

JB

“ Dear Sherry,
My prayers are with you and your family.
Love Always, your Maryite sister.

Janelda

Janelda Biagas - June 11, 2020 at 03:45 PM

TM

“ My condolences to the Taylor family. Mr. Rosey was always a hero to us as kids living in Seabrook and the East. I remember that we would count down the time until his return after football season for him to throw us the football on Prentiss Ave. He never let us down. Rest in peace!

Toya McWilliams - June 08, 2020 at 04:15 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.



June 03, 2020 at 08:19 AM

DL

“ Each time I saw him from the time of my childhood to adulthood, Uncle Roosevelt always encouraged me with his welcoming smile and his words of encouragement. Although I had not seen him in quite awhile, his influence has still left a lasting legacy on me.

My deepest sympathy and love,

Diane Hunt Lewis

Diane Lewis - June 03, 2020 at 07:44 AM



“ *Crystal Cross Bouquet was purchased for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.*



June 02, 2020 at 11:28 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.*



June 02, 2020 at 05:15 PM

SR

“ My dearest Claudia,
I am offering my deepest, most heartfelt condolences to you, Sherri, Lisa, Brian, and family. Rosey, your beloved husband, your amazing father is a giant among men, in all aspects of his life, and he shall be deeply missed. His legendary achievements in life have established a legacy that shall last far beyond all our earthly years. However, Rosey's legacy extends far beyond his public persona. As a person, I shall always remember his huge, brilliant smile, his laughter, his warmth, kindness, generosity, graciousness, hospitality, and unbelievable humility. I am tremendously honored and blessed to have known him.

Please know, my prayers are with you. May God continue to bless and keep you. May our Lord's amazing grace and tender mercies grant you His strength and peace, for the trumpet has sounded, and Rosey is now home. Our Father has proclaimed unto him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant....WELL DONE!"

I love you, CT.💕
Always and forever,
Your friend,
-SR

Sandra Richards-Henry - June 02, 2020 at 01:46 PM

SP

“ Dear Claudia: I was deeply saddened to learn of Rosie's death. I recall with great fondness our times together. Our business venture, social events with you and him and just our time together talking sports and politics. He was truly a great athlete, father, husband and friend. Please extend my condolences to your family for me. Lot's of love to you. Steve Plotkin

Steven Plotkin - June 02, 2020 at 09:59 AM

MM

“ Maurice McGee purchased the Be My Love Bouquet with Red Roses for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.



Maurice McGee - June 02, 2020 at 09:58 AM

RH

“ I am so sorry to hear of the passing of Rosevelt "Rosey" Taylor. Rosey and I go all the way back to Joseph Samuel Clark Senior High School. We were football players. The team gave Clark its first and only city championship in 1956. Rosey was a very important player for that that year. He was an outstanding running back and strong as an ox. I considered myself as a defensive player until in practice, on a running play, I was the last player to stop him from reaching the end zone. Well, I wasn't as great as I thought. He ran completely over me. He was tough as nails. Not only was he a great football player, he was also great at basketball. It was so interesting to read in his obit our team motto: "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dig." Our mascot was the Bulldog thus our motto. We were not an overall big team but boy, did we have some fight in us. History be told, Rosey was one of the earliest football player to go to the NFL. He was not drafted out of Grambling but went as a "walk on." He played for the Chicago Bears for our 8 years and was and outstanding player for a combined 13 years, appearing in a Super Bowl with the Washington Redskins. To me, he was a big role model for Black students who saw him in the NFL and thought if they well in school, there was a chance for them too. Rosey was also a very nice guy. He was always willing to help anyone who wanted to be helped on and off the the field. As far as I can determine, Rosey was one of the nicest guys that I knew. He graduated from Clark in 1956 and I did in 1957. Rest In Peace, Rosey. The Dog did a great job and now is resting in God's land.

Reginald Harris - June 02, 2020 at 01:14 AM

RW

“ Rosey was a great role model and mentor. Because of Black Men like him boys like me became better men. When I was in 7th grade at 41 school he was a substitute teacher and taught me to play tennis with a volleyball net and wooden paddles. I attended JS Clark and became an excellent athlete even though I was only 127 lbs and played the starting center position. Rosey was also a friend of my older brother Warren G. Woodfork New Orleans 1st African American Chief of Police. I was fortunate enough to visit with him later in life when visiting my mother-in-law at Lafon Nursing Home. What a great experience. Rosey will always have a special place in my heart. May he Rest In Peace.

Richard M. Woodfork - June 01, 2020 at 10:33 PM

GF

“ God Bless, From the Canisius Football Family purchased the Memories to Treasure for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.



God Bless, From the Canisius Football Family - June 01, 2020 at 07:59 PM

KM

“ Sherri,
The '62 Girls offer sincere condolences on the passing of your dear father. Praying that God will give you, you mother, Alicia, Brian, and family the strength and peace to sustain you during this difficult time.
Love and Prayers

Kathy Fields McLeod - June 01, 2020 at 07:38 PM

ED

“ As a young kids I managed to sneak into the Los Angeles Colusium. The Bears were playing the Rams. I ran up to Rose you on the field and grabbed me recognizing me from home. He introduced me to Dick Baucus and Mike Dickson. How excited I was that he recognized me from Clark High school where I played football. He wanted me to attend Grambling on a football scholarship sponsored by him.

Elder Reginald Daniels - June 01, 2020 at 07:19 PM

JS

“ Rosey was a dear friend and will be sadly missed-he was a great athlete, but greater person-rest in peace my friend and may God be with you-My deepest sympathy to all of your loved ones, family, and friends--Judge Eddie Sapir

Judge Eddie Sapir - June 01, 2020 at 12:58 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Roosevelt "Rosey" Taylor.



June 01, 2020 at 10:36 AM