

WILLIAM DAVIS TAYLOR

The Taylor newspaper family of Boston has played an important role in the development of the American Antiquarian Society since 1912, when the first of four generations of this family, Charles H. Taylor, founder of the *Boston Globe*, was elected to membership. His grandson William Davis Taylor, born on April 2, 1908, was elected a member of AAS in April 1973, and died on February 19, 2002. Dave, as he was known to his friends, was a native of Boston and graduated from Harvard in 1931. He joined the *Globe* staff as a junior accountant in that year and subsequently worked in all the newspaper's departments.

Taylor succeeded his father and grandfather as publisher of *The Boston Globe* in 1955. When he retired, after twenty-two years at the helm of the newspaper, his son William O. Taylor (elected to AAS in October 1980) became publisher. Davis Taylor was a newspaperman through and through, and his years of experience in all facets of the newspaper operation prepared him to become an exemplary publisher. When he assumed that position, he ceded the title of editor-in-chief that his father had held as well as publisher to Laurence Winship and encouraged the editorial staff to develop a strong and principled voice for the newspaper. In the mid-1960s, the folksy name 'Uncle Dudley' was dropped as the signature of the lead editorial, and the avuncular tone, local focus, and neutral stances on public matters were replaced with sharp editorial advocacy. In 1967 the newspaper criticized the United States's involvement in the war in Vietnam and called for withdrawal from the conflict. The *Globe* was only the second major newspaper in the country to take such a stand. Also in 1967, after seventy-five years of not endorsing political candidates, the *Globe* endorsed Kevin H. White as mayor of Boston in his race against antibusing activist Louise Day Hicks. After the 'Saturday Night Massacre,' when Attorney General Elliot Richardson resigned and President Nixon fired Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus and Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox,

the *Globe* became one of the first newspapers in the nation to call for Nixon's resignation. During Taylor's tenure as publisher, the newspaper won eleven Pulitzer Prizes, and in 1972 he was elected chairman of the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

Taylor was more than a good corporate citizen and leader in the field of journalism; in his personal life he exhibited the morality that he advocated in the pages of the newspaper. In 1965 he took part in the historic Selma, Alabama, civil rights march as an anonymous individual. In 1980 he was a founding member—with Mayor White, Cardinal Humberto Medeiros of Boston, and Bank of Boston President Richard D. Hill—of the Boston Committee, a group whose goal was the improvement of race relations in the city. When the United States government threatened to punish the *Globe* for publishing the Pentagon Papers, he volunteered to be the first to go to jail. But he was not all business and moral rectitude. In his moments of relaxation, Taylor was an expert sailor and accomplished deep-sea fisherman. He competed several times in Newport-Bermuda and Annapolis-Newport races, and he even tried out for the Olympic sailing team in 1956 at the age of forty-eight.

As a member of the American Antiquarian Society, he continued in the family tradition by contributing materials to the library's collection. He served on the Society's development committee and helped to raise the first permanent endowment funds to support and preserve the newspaper collection. Although this unmatched newspaper collection had its roots in Isaiah Thomas's collecting of representative colonial and early republic newspapers as background research for his *History of Printing in America*, it had no dedicated endowment until this effort was undertaken in the 1970s. Taylor had a particularly warm relationship with AAS Council president and fellow newspaperman James Russell Wiggins and they worked closely to ensure the continuing growth and preservation of the newspapers and periodicals collection.

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