

# Opinion Page

The Herald-Times-Reporter

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## Words to consider

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"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Philippians 2:16

Here's news Christian friend! Our greatest job is not to explain the Word of God but to extend it.

# Mully and Billie Taylor: Stewards of the trees

By MARGE MILEY  
Managing Editor



## Milestone!

A single small pine tree stood between the white-draped caskets before the altar of St. Robert Catholic Church in Merrill Wednesday.

The little tree was symbolic of the millions of trees planted in Wisconsin since 1944 because of the vision of Melvin N. (Mully) Taylor and his wife, Wilhelmine "Billie" Taylor, during their long association with Trees for Tomorrow Resources Education Center at Eagle River.

Mully and Billie, who had retired in the mid-1970s, were found dead of smoke inhalation at their Merrill home following an early morning fire Monday.

"The whole town is in shock," one woman told me Wednesday. The fire gutted their historic Victorian home which was filled with antiques they had collected through years of travels. The home had recently been featured on a tour of homes sponsored by the Lincoln County Historical Society. The Taylors had been active members of the society.

Mully was 80 years old, and his wife, Billie, was 82. Their survivors included their three sons and their families, and a brother, Wilbert "Web" Taylor and his family of Manitowoc. (Web was principal of Garfield and Adams schools during his 38-year career in the Manitowoc Schools. He retired in 1972.)

My association with Mully and Billie Taylor spanned about two decades through workshops at the Trees for Tomorrow Center in Eagle River.

In 1972, when our group, all members of the Wisconsin Federation of Business and Professional Women, were on our way to Clam Lake, the old yellow bus we were riding in, broke down, and a routine fieldtrip turned into an adventure.

When I came home, I wrote an article about "The Demise of the Old Yellow Bus." Mully liked the story so much that he used it as the "spark" for a fund drive for a new bus.

The BPW Federation and the Trees administration worked hard on that fund drive and managed to raise \$10,000 for a "new" second-hand bus, which was still in use the last time I was at "Trees" in 1982.

Well, in recognition of all this, the BPW and "Trees" voted to plant a "Marge Miley" tree in the nature center's tribute circle of trees. That was in 1973.

However, I couldn't travel to Eagle River that year. I was hospitalized — seriously ill — and so upset that one of my doctors even considered getting an ambulance plane to get me up there on a stretcher.

Mully planted my tree that Labor Day weekend in 1973 along with some assistance from the BPW members at the ceremony. The new bus was properly christened with a bottle of water from the Eagle River.

Mully sent me the nicest letter after that. I recall it brightened one of many dismal days at

the University Hospitals in Madison. I s have it somewhere.

When the news broke Monday that Taylors had died in a tragic fire in their hc in Merrill, I knew that only a blizzard co stop me from getting to northern Wiscor this time — for the funeral.

And it was a beautiful day, the kind of d the staff at "Trees" wished for duri workshops and seminars for thousands children and adults during all the years Mu was executive director of the center.

During the service, the priest said, "Millic of trees came to life (in Wisconsin) because the special ministry of Mully and Billie here earth."

He cited the by-products of all the tre planted because of reforestation and conservation efforts of the "Trees" center — lumber for building, paper for newspapers, books a magazines.

For years, people will enjoy the fruits of the stewardship on earth, the priest said, stewardship of trees:

I don't know what the plans are for the litt tree which stood in the church on Wednesda But I know it will find its special place amo all the millions of trees now growing in Wisco sin because of the work the Taylors did for many years in our state.

Trees for Tomorrow began in 1944 when group of nine paper and power compani formed the non-profit organization to refore vast areas of Wisconsin woodlands which ha been over-harvested and neglected, especial during the years of World War II.

Focus of the program changed in rece: years to environmental issues and the prese vation of all natural resources.

But, as Henry Haskell, executive direct now at the Trees center said, "Mully's conse vation approach — the wise management ar wise use of natural resources — is still th guiding principle at the center."

Henry said a Mully Taylor memorial schola ship fund will be set up to establish addition: conservation workshops at the center.