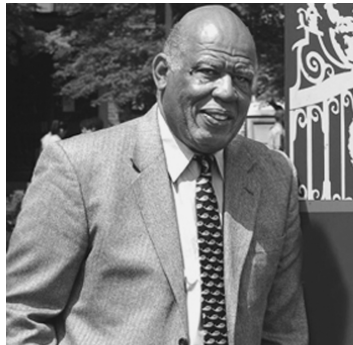


## 11

## Orlando L. Taylor



*Few standardized tests take culturally based communication or language issues into account at any level of the assessment process. Indeed, most standardized tests, and the communicative environments in which they are administered are culturally discriminatory*



*against many cultural groups in the United States, since specific norms have not been established for them, and since insufficient numbers of persons from the groups are typically included in norming samples. African Americans, the nation's largest "minority group" are among the groups most vulnerable to test bias, particularly those persons who come from low-income, poorly educated or socially isolated communities.*

(Taylor & Lee, 1987, p. 68)

## ❖ INTRODUCTION

Orlando Taylor, a visionary researcher and transformative leader, became the first African American president of the National Communication Association (NCA) in 1998. In its almost 100-year history, there has not been another African American who has been elected to lead this major communication association. During his leadership of NCA, Taylor not only provided the leadership to move communication to a more prominent location geographically but also with respect to the national academic community and to the funding agencies and foundations that have cyclically given money to other disciplines to do the work in which communication researchers specialize. Because of his efforts and those of his successors, communication has reached unprecedented levels of respect and recognition from such entities as the National Research Council, American Association of Higher Education, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Additionally, the National Research Council has now decided to include the field of communication in its periodic rankings of doctoral programs, a useful tool for assessing placement and recruitment strategies. Taylor did not stop lobbying for communication after his presidency. He also served as chair and member of the board of directors for the Council for Graduate Schools and the Advisory Council of the Jacob Javits National Fellowship Program in the Humanities, which is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. Subsequently, he became president of the Council of Social Science Associations, which represents most social science disciplinary associations in the United States.

Mentored by J. Jeffrey Auer and Robert Milisen at Indiana University to have a prodigious career, Taylor never took rare opportunities for granted. In 1967, when Milisen was funded for an important project, he named Taylor, a young junior professor, to be one of the investigators. This appointment set Taylor up nicely to eventually become a principal investigator on a subsequent grant with Milisen. From these grants, Taylor could begin writing publications and his own grant proposals. The first grant became a catalyst for many others to come. At this point in his career, Taylor, vice provost of Graduate Research and graduate school dean at Howard University, has received more than \$30 million in federally and privately sponsored research, graduate training, and program development grants.

Many institutions have recognized Taylor's achievements in research, teaching, and service. In 2003, he was awarded Yale University's Bouchet Leadership Award in Minority Graduate Education, named in

honor of Edward Bouchet, the first African American to earn a doctorate in the United States. Moreover, he has received honorary doctorate degrees from Purdue, Hope, and DePauw Universities, and distinguished alumni awards from Hampton University and University of Michigan. Beyond these accolades, two of the greatest moments of his career were when he was designated as an "Old Master" at Purdue and given the highest honors within the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association ("Honors of the Association").

Taylor is a pioneer of research in the fields of communication sciences and disorders, educational linguistics, sociolinguistics, and communication. He has always had a passion for education and has been an advocate for educational progress of minority students, as is clearly implied in the opening epigraph. He is author of nearly a dozen scholarly books and more than 50 refereed scholarly articles and chapters. Taylor's research employs multiple methods, although his work is primarily quantitative, often experimental, and conceptually theoretic. Although Taylor is known within academia for his ubiquitous leadership, prolific record of publications, and countless grants, he was also one of the members of the well-known and controversial "Bloomington Nine" (a group of eight student activists and their advisor, Taylor, at Indiana University [IU] in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1969). As Taylor worked to outline and develop a description for a new executive university leadership position titled vice president of Minority Affairs, the IU president decided to appoint Taylor to the position. Just before Taylor was to take office, eight Black students interrupted a faculty senate meeting, in which the senate was conferring with the senior university leaders, including the president. The eight students presented a set of demands and refused to allow anyone to leave, except Taylor because they knew him. The students kept the rest of the university leaders there for three days. Their demands were directly related to the university's climate of racial hostility. Taylor recalled, "Indiana was the home of the Ku Klux Klan, and there were some threats of violence by the Klan and others against me and other African Americans—very bad threats, threats of life. It was hard to be liberal, active, and Black in Indiana circa 1969." Although the negotiations ended right before the National Guard arrived, a grand jury panel was assembled and wanted detailed answers to questions about who was involved and what happened. One person remembered the chancellor asking Taylor to make the students leave, to which Taylor replied, "I know these students. They are good students and they would not be here if there was not a big problem, and I think we better

sit here and listen to them." Taylor remembered that he decided then "that if I was supposed to be the Black person designated to 'keep the natives quiet,' I would have no credibility with the constituents, and I refused to do it." The grand jury indicted the eight students and Taylor, their advisor, for conspiracy to take over the flagship state university of Indiana. After many faculty members put up their houses and bailed everyone out of jail, Taylor discovered the university's unwillingness to honor the offer to become vice president of Minority Affairs, and he had already resigned from his faculty appointment to take the position. Taylor was then without a job, but "wisdom is going through life and paying attention." Taylor was wise enough to have a backup option: he went to Washington D.C. to conduct a \$500,000 Ford Foundation project at the Center for Applied Linguistics to address issues of language diversity in the nation's schools, particularly those with large numbers of African American students.

Taylor has consistently exercised wisdom and has been a persistent go-getter—someone who has refused to allow his God-given talents to subside and dreams to be deferred (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004).

#### ❖ BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Orlando LeRoy Taylor was born to the late Carrie and LeRoy Taylor in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Carrie, an elementary and secondary school-teacher, finished two years of college at Selma University and received an associate degree in 1930, which was a sufficient credential for teaching in the Alabama public schools. However, LeRoy, who had only a sixth-grade education, wanted to move his family to Chattanooga—where better industrial job opportunities were available for Black people. Taylor suggested, "They were part of a migration of Blacks from the rural south to the north and the urban south." A few years after Carrie's graduation, she and LeRoy were married and decided to make the move. LeRoy worked in a steel mill, and Carrie planned to teach. When they arrived, however, she discovered that all teachers were required to have a four-year degree. For 16 years, while raising her two children, Carrie did not teach. In 1948, at the age of 40, she completed her bachelor's degree at Alabama State University and resumed her teaching career in 1950. Taylor was in high school at that time, and his younger brother Robert was in elementary school. Before his mother's shift to teaching, Taylor viewed his parents in blue-collar jobs, and knew nothing except what he called a "traditional working

class background." Despite their class and racial background, Taylor's parents decided to move to an all-White neighborhood in the Chattanooga metropolitan area when Taylor was 5 years old. Because of school segregation, Taylor could not attend the neighborhood all-White elementary school, but had to attend an all-Black school several blocks away (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004).

Taylor's parents were inspirations for Taylor. His mother is still alive, and his father passed away only three years ago. They instilled self-discipline, independence, perseverance, self-respect, and respect for others—values that became constitutive aspects of Taylor's personality, even into adulthood. Because he lived in an all-White neighborhood during segregation, Taylor grew up with no friends in his neighborhood. Consequently, he learned to be creative as he sought to entertain himself. He remembered:

I was caught up with strategies for being self-sufficient, and I learned to entertain myself. Even to this day I'm not really a group person; I'm sort of a loner. Of course, I'm a friendly person, I interact with people, but I don't need a crowd to be entertained. (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004)

Taylor also developed a love for music. In the 1940s and 1950s, there were not very many options for those interested in listening to Black music. In fact, there was only one radio station whose signal was audible: WLAC-Radio broadcast out of Nashville, Tennessee. "The dee-jay was a guy who was known throughout the south as his pseudonym Randy, borrowing the name of a famous record store in Gallatin, Tennessee," recalled Taylor. Both Randy and Randy's record store were well-known. In the early 1950s, Black music was a neglected part of the market. After realizing that there was a niche, a White radio station in Chattanooga, WDXB, entered the market with an R & B platform. The radio station managers hired someone named Ted Bryant as the disc jockey, who Taylor claimed was "a real pioneer in Black radio." Ted was scheduled to go on a vacation, and the station held a contest in which the winner's prize was to substitute for Ted for two weeks. Taylor participated and won, although he was only 14 years old and a high school sophomore. He noted, "My voice was recognized every time I was on the radio because I was the only kid. After two weeks when Ted returned, by audience demand, they gave me my own weekend show." Shortly thereafter, a Black radio station, WFMS, came to Chattanooga, and Taylor was offered his own daily R & B radio show called "Teen Time." He served as dee-jay and accepted song requests every day after

school, 5–6 p.m. In the summer, he worked full-time at the station. Although these radio experiences became stimuli for Taylor's interest in the field of communication, his motivation for attending college was cemented by his parents and teachers since elementary school (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004).

#### ❖ ACADEMIC BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Taylor attended Orchard Knob elementary and junior high school and was a good student. He knew that poor grades would not be tolerated by his parents, but he loved school so grades were not a problem. Taylor attended Howard High School at the age of 14 and graduated right before his 17th birthday. Howard High School was one of several educational and medical institutions throughout the south that was named after, initiated by, and supported by the Freedman's Bureau (Howard University is another such institution). Taylor explained, "Pretty much everyone was expected to go to college. That was common in those days." Of course, the fact that his mother was an educator facilitated Taylor's love for books and general discovery. He had a cultivated thirst for knowledge that could easily be satiated in college. In his senior year of high school, Taylor won a four-year scholarship to attend college at Hampton Institute, a well-known historically Black college in Hampton, Virginia. Although Taylor never lived anywhere except Tennessee, he wanted to try something different, so he confronted any anxieties he had and enrolled in college in 1953. Several of his classmates went to Morehouse, Spelman, or Fisk. Taylor reminisced, "From where I was, in Tennessee, going to Virginia was going up north," so the prospects seemed exciting (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004).

With his developed interests and skills in communication, Taylor found himself working on the student newspaper and periodically working as a dee-jay at the campus radio station. Over the next few years, he would have a lot to discuss via these media outlets. In 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case would be won by Thurgood Marshall, and 14-year-old Emmett Till would be beaten and shot to death one year later for allegedly whistling at a White female. The year of 1955 is also historically important: Rosa Parks's refusal to give up her seat for a White person at the front of a bus instigated the bus boycotts in Montgomery, Alabama, led by young Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Virginia had many boycotts, sit-ins, and other civil rights activity, and the city of Hampton was no exception.

During his undergraduate matriculation at Hampton, Taylor was an active student. He even pledged Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, a predominately Black fraternity whose mission as a social organization emphasizes service and educational achievement. Taylor's major was communication, and the field included speech communication, speech pathology, and theater. He took courses in each of these areas and added psychology and sociology classes to round out his broad liberal arts curriculum. Taylor explored other opportunities and found that Hampton had a student exchange program in which Black and White universities sent students to the other college for a year. One of the conditions of this arrangement was that any student activities the student was involved in had to be replicated at the new host institution. Because Taylor was a member of a Black fraternity, he met the brothers of the predominately White fraternity, Delta Upsilon, at Denison University, his almost all-White host university, which was located in the all-White town of Granville, Ohio. The Delta Upsilon members allowed him to stay at their fraternity house, and Taylor's interest in interracial and intercultural communication was piqued. He began to notice everything—nonverbal communication, language and communication styles, politeness and request strategies—that distinguished him from others in the house. For example, "I learned that White people would always look me in the eye when they would listen to me talk, which signified to me they were staring at me and didn't like me. That was a perceived insult that I later learned was a misunderstanding. They really were just showing they were paying attention to me, so when I averted my gaze, they thought I was ignoring them." Taylor also noticed that they enacted indirect requests such as "Do you want to open that door?" or "Do you want to open that window?" He viewed this as a "sneaky way to get me to do something for them." He wondered why they did not simply say, "Would you open the door for me please?" He said this was starkly contrasted to what he experienced when he left Denison to visit Columbus, Ohio, for a weekend and had a chance to resume interaction with Black people. Those observations became paramount to his later research interests concerning interracial language differences and his subsequent grant-funded work with the U.S. Army concerning cross-cultural communication (O. L. Taylor, personal communication, February 3, 2004).

While Taylor was at Denison, Lionel Crocker, one of the early intellectual giants in communication, mentored him and taught him phonetics. Taylor thrived in his classes and came to understand that he could easily compete intellectually with White students in the classroom. When he left Denison, returned to Hampton, and graduated in

## 230 BLACK PIONEERS IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

1957 with a bachelor's degree in education, Taylor knew he would go to a predominately White university for graduate school—and he did. He applied for and received financial support from Indiana University and a scholarship from the Indiana state government, which paid for his entire graduate program. As a master's degree student, Taylor worked as a speech clinician, identifying speech disorders in patients. In the same year as his graduation from Hampton, Taylor was married and had two children immediately who were only 11 months apart in age: Orlando Taylor II and Ingrid Gelete Taylor.

In 1960, Taylor earned his master's degree from Indiana University. Through nurturing mentors and a solid interdisciplinary communication curriculum, Taylor learned the essential skills necessary to succeed in academia. Between the mentorship of Robert Milisen and J. Jeffrey Auer, Taylor was well-equipped. Milisen was a highly respected teacher and researcher. Auer, who was certainly a well-respected scholar in his own right, was executive vice president and then president of the National Communication Association (then Speech Association of America) and editor of *Speech Monographs*. So Taylor witnessed up close the inner workings of highly successful academic careers in communication. Taylor took an eclectic mix of courses, including speech, psychology, reading, and sociology, and became acquainted with the methodologies and vocabularies associated with those areas of study. At the urging of a professor at Purdue University, Taylor left IU to pursue his doctorate degree. He was very aware of what it meant to be an academician. Between 1960 and 1962, he directed the speech and hearing clinic at the Fort Wayne State School in Indiana. In 1962, Taylor enrolled in the doctoral program in education at University of Michigan in 1962. It was a decade of social upheaval, and students and community citizens were protesting all over the nation. In 1966, the year he graduated with his doctorate in education, people were still mourning the 1965 death of Malcolm X, and the Black Power movement was born with the advent of the Black Panther Party, founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

Taylor had just completed his dissertation on linking brain function with language and communication behaviors when he was invited back to Indiana University to be a tenure-track assistant professor—an appointment that would position him as one of only a handful of Black scholars at major research institutions. Although the University of Michigan had five Black tenured or tenure-track scholars across all the disciplines, Indiana University had no Black tenured scholars and only two that were untenured. Taylor became the third Black tenure-line faculty member at the university, and the first in communication. He



turned down an offer from Southern University to come to IU to remain consistent with his dream of teaching at a major research university. Taylor stayed at IU for five years before moving on to the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., where he produced research concerning sociolinguistics, educational linguistics, and intercultural communication. This proximity to many area universities gave Taylor the opportunity to teach at Federal City College (now called the University of the District of Columbia) between 1970 and 1973 while intermittently teaching at Howard University, the nation's only urban land grant institution. Taylor joined the Howard University faculty as a full-time professor 1973 and has been there ever since.

When Taylor arrived at Howard, Lyndrey Niles was leading the speech department, which had just initiated a doctoral program in 1971. From 1975 to 1980, Taylor was chair of the department, which graduated its first doctoral students in 1976. During his tenure, Taylor hired several new faculty members, including Melbourne Cummings. He later became dean of the School of Communication and served from 1985 through 1993. Taylor supported the development of the *Howard Journal of Communications* with its founding editor, William J. Starosta. He also played a leading role in enhancing the School of Communication's national reputation, which later resulted in a ranking as third in the nation in the field of intercultural communication, being the annual producer of one of the nation's largest number of communication doctoral students, and the absolute largest number of African American doctoral recipients in communication.

#### ❖ CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

In a profession in which researchers are expected to develop and specialize in only one or two lines of research throughout their careers, Orlando Taylor chose a much more multifaceted career. His pioneering program of communication research can be characterized as having five major strands (which are described in the following sections): (1) aphasia and language acquisition; (2) culture, language, and communication disorders; (3) Black English; (4) children's educational performance and test bias; and (5) graduate education.

#### **Aphasia and Language Acquisition, 1969–1974**

Not every scholar can claim to have written a magnum opus by midcareer, or even later in life, but Orlando Taylor's quintessential

work in the field of communication sciences and disorders was published when he was 35 years old. It was among the first in a set of experimental research studies that emerged from both his dissertation and the funded research grants with Robert Milisen. After spending a couple of years researching the rehabilitation of aphasia, Taylor uncovered some interesting facets of aphasia. This work with aphasics by him and his associates would come to be frequently cited as major monographs connecting neurology to speech capacity. Aphasia is defined as "The loss or impairment of the power to use words, usually resulting from a brain lesion" (Woolf, 1977, p. 52). Taylor's principal concern in this line of research was discovering what happens when normal linguistic storage processes and functional neuroanatomy of language are interrupted by the occurrence of brain damage. His argument was that aphasia, when linked to short-term memory loss, could be discovered to severely limit human beings' capacity to produce speech. Taylor and Swinney (1971) explained:

It is obvious that some type of memory system is necessary for sentences to be held long enough (in memory) for comprehension. . . . It seems logical to assert that research on the processes underlying the storage of linguistic segments in STM (short-term memory) is mandatory for a complete theory of language decoding for normal subjects. . . . Further, as language comprehension difficulties and reduced auditory memory span are often characteristics of the aphasic disorder, it could be argued that aphasics' comprehension problems may be directly related to memory deficits. (Taylor & Swinney, 1971, pp. 578–579)

In this 1971 study, which compared short-term memory recognition in eight adult aphasics and eight adult nonaphasics, Taylor's results indicated that verbal responses to stimuli were more latent for adult aphasics because their limited memory storage capacity caused them to self-terminate their memory search much more quickly than the adult nonaphasics, who could perform an exhaustive memory search of recently occurred events. This study of neuroanatomical functioning was heuristic because it helped explicate how aphasia operates as a consequence of language decoding, memory recognition, and brain trauma. Whether it was about the effects of language loss or language reacquisition, each of Taylor's early speech pathology studies of aphasics advanced the field beyond its known parameters. Taylor's interest in intercultural communication never subsided, so he decided to pursue that theme within the context of language and communication disorders research.

### **Culture, Language, and Communication Disorders, 1969–1994**

In 1969, several things were happening in Orlando Taylor's life. Not only were his two children turning teenagers soon but he also left Indiana University to become associate director and senior research fellow at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. The Bloomington Nine controversy was over, but the experience introduced him to social justice activism. As a fairly new scholar in the field of speech and hearing, Taylor noticed the absence of Black people and their experiences within the communication disorders conferences and literature and knew he had to become an academic change agent. Taylor and Charles Hurst, Ronald Williams, Gloria Walker, Earnest Moore, and others developed an agenda to forcefully petition change in the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), the nation's largest and most respected organization of speech and hearing professionals. The result was the founding of a unit of the association called the Black Caucus, which promoted another thriving organization known as the National Black Speech, Language, and Hearing Association. Grounding their ideas in the scientific literature of the field, Taylor, Stroud, Hurst, Moore, and Williams (1969) wrote:

Unfortunately, far too many speech pathologists view legitimate language differences among Afro-Americans from a pathology model. The result is that a number of Black children are receiving speech and language therapy, particularly in urban areas, when they in fact, have no pathology. Negative psychological effects on the Black child are obvious. . . . All too often clinicians fail to understand the Black child's language, as well as the child himself. (Taylor, Stroud, Hurst, Moore, and Williams, 1969, p. 221)

Shortly after this unit was created, Taylor learned of Black scholars trying to initiate the same type of intellectual activism in the Speech Association of America (now the National Communication Association). Taylor and his cohort met and organized with Jack Daniel, Molefi Asante, Lyndrey Niles, and others to lay the foundation for the beginning of the Speech Association of America Black Caucus. Because Taylor's educational training occurred in departments that taught both speech pathology and speech communication, he shared common interests with both segments of the field of communication and wrote one of the earliest pieces that called for the broad inclusion of Black perspectives in the communication curricula.

This project led Taylor to begin researching Black language concerns, which became a significant line of inquiry. After a few years away from communication disorders research, Taylor and Bruce Williams published a well-received book, *International Issues in Black Communication* (Taylor & Williams, 1980). As he worked back and forth between his research on Ebonics and communication disorders, Taylor began to link language acquisition and use with racial identity politics among speech pathology practitioners. He and his research associates began to study service delivery and diagnoses of speech pathology among urban Blacks—an extension of his early call for this in his 1969 article explaining the philosophy of the newly formed Black Caucus (Taylor, 1969). In their study of rehabilitation, Taylor and his colleagues found that speech pathologists and audiologists were not always accurately diagnosing Blacks for communication disorders because they did not understand the significance of speech differences among linguistically diverse populations. This research prompted Taylor to begin developing a tome that resulted in a two-volume anthology: *Nature of Communication Disorders in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations* (Taylor, 1986a) and *Treatment of Communication Disorders in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Populations* (Taylor, 1986b). These books covered the historical, conceptual and scientific speech and hearing issues among multiple populations—Whites, Blacks, Jews, Mexicans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders. This first-of-its-kind monumental effort also offered suggestions for the diagnosis and treatment of disorders among these multiple constituencies. Taylor wrote consistently and expanded this line of research until the late 1990s, working with scholars such as Kay Payne and many of his graduate students and doctoral recipients, and writing chapters for many books, including one for a book edited by Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson and Teun van Dijk.

### **Black English, 1969–1999**

One area of research productivity among Orlando Taylor's multiple and overlapping lines of research is Black English. There have been multiple names given to the study of Black language differences, but Black English (Harrison & Trabasso, 1976; Rodriguez, 2000; Smitherman, 1994), Black English Vernacular (Labov, 1972), and Ebonics (Perry & Delpit, 1988) were the most popular terms and Taylor uses these three variations most often in his research. *Ebonics* is a term coined in 1971 by psychologist Robert Williams. Derived from the combination of *ebony* and *phonics*, it was defined as "Black sounds." With Taylor's background in the production, acquisition, and auditing of verbal

communication, as well as his investigative interests in the mistreatment and misdiagnoses of Black children, this area was a logical next step for him. The emerging field of sociolinguistics was dominated by scholars such as Geneva Smitherman, William Labov, Dell Hymes, Lorenzo Turner, and J. L. Dillard. In the most sophisticated of these studies, the term *Black English* facilitated explanation of African American linguistic carryovers of Africanized phonetics and grammar while speaking English. In his research, Taylor maintained that school-aged children are often objects of racial and linguistic prejudice inflicted upon them by their teachers and peers because of the way they talk and because of ignorance about the rich cultural history and origins of Black English. Taylor felt the need to join the cadre of scholars fighting for the linguistic integrity and legitimacy of Black English, realizing that the life chances of Black children hung in the balance. He produced several studies concerning the nature of bidialectalism (Taylor, Payne, & Cole, 1983), educational equity and language attitudes (Taylor & Payne, 1983), language variations and communication disorders (Taylor & Payne, 1983; Taylor & Stewart, 1986), and educational policy (Taylor, 1975; Taylor & Leonard, 1999).

### **Children's Educational Performance and Test Bias, 1972–1999**

For Orlando Taylor, the entire conversation about Ebonics and the open protest against it in 1997 by the Oakland, California school board was always about Black children's self-esteem and educational success. The best way to ensure this was to become a cultural worker who enforced a radical progressive pedagogy that promoted respect of all cultural experiences, despite their differences. Consequently, Taylor decided to move the conversation forward by studying how Black language differences were entwined with Black children's educational performance. One of the most immediate areas to explore with respect to performance was standardized testing and latent cultural biases in test construction. He launched a series of investigations of valid testing procedures (Taylor, 1978; Taylor, Hoover, & Politzer, 1987; Taylor & Lee, 1987; Taylor & Payne, 1983). In one study (Cole & Taylor, 1990), Taylor found that in three articulation tests among Black children from working-class families, the children scored significantly higher when the test was constructed with a Black English Vernacular dialect and none was clinically diagnosed with a communication disorder. When administered in standard English form, the performance results were lower, and six Black students were diagnosed with a disorder. So, Cole and Taylor's argument

(1990) was that if standardized tests are to accurately measure knowledge content or academic competence, they ought to consider the biases inherent in the standard. In his most recent book, *Making the Connection: Academic Achievement and Language Diversity in African American Children* (Taylor, Adger, & Christian, 1999), Taylor and his coauthors synthesize his life's work on language variation, identity politics, and academic achievement.

### **Graduate Education, 1993-present**

Orlando Taylor's fervor for studying academic success led him to his current line of research about graduate education. This broad area of research includes studies of student mentoring, recruitment, and retention as well as faculty diversity. The primary impetus for Taylor's preoccupation with this area of inquiry is evident in his work described so far. He has received more than \$30 million in various types of research, training, and program development grants. In his roles as board member of the Council for Graduate Schools, advisory council member of the Jacob Javits National Fellowship Program in the Humanities, vice provost for Research at Howard University, and dean of the Howard University Graduate School, Taylor is engaged in the everyday research and practice of successful graduate education. It is natural for him to have delved into graduate education research.

Taylor's earliest work in this area, written in 1993, dealt with diversifying faculty and mentoring people of color. Quality graduate programs benefit from productive and nurturing faculty, as well as undying support of students via student mentoring and effective teaching. Certainly, there are things faculty must do and students must do, but peer group networks, positive reinforcement from significant others, and proper mentoring are key. This latter point, Taylor and Carter argue, cannot be underestimated because mentors are not all the same—some mentoring can lead to counterproductive decisions and outcomes. Taylor has devoted 10 years of his career to the development and promotion of the "Preparing Future Faculty" program. Through his research and several million dollars of grants from the U.S. government and such foundations as the Pew Charitable Trust, Taylor has become an ambassador for graduate education.

### **❖ CONCLUSION**

Orlando L. Taylor is a pioneer of communication research and a pioneering academic leader. His accolades throughout his distinguished

career are numerous and speak volumes about his service and research contributions. He is a genuinely wonderful human being. In all the discussions about disciplinary accomplishments and lifetime achievements, it is sometimes easy to overlook the simplest of attributes. Taylor is a father, brother, vice provost, dean, nationally recognized interdisciplinary academic leader, professor, and founding organizer of the ASHA and NCA Black Caucuses and the Black College Communication Association. He is a prodigious intellectual with a remarkable career and he continues to contribute tirelessly to the field of communication.

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