



Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor

July 15, 1972 - January 13, 2021

Tonya Rachelle' Taylor, daughter of George Taylor and Gwendolyn White Taylor, was born on July 15, 1972, in Jacksonville, Florida. She departed this earthly life on January 13, 2021, at her home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Tonya was a member of the 1994 graduating class of Elon University, where she received a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. At Elon, she was the first black editor-in-chief of "The Pendulum" Newspaper. Her work as an influential black student certainly shook things up around campus. She brought attention to real problems that African American students faced at the school. She was a very devoted Elon Alumna. She also attended New York University's Tisch School, where she studied Journalism and Communication.

Tonya was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She was also a member of the Fortune Magazine Business Council, the Elon University Alumni Association Board, and Jack and Jill of America. She served as speaker for the Association of Fundraising Professionals and was a founding board member and Public Relations Chair for Young Women's Charter School of Rochester.

Tonya had over twenty-five years of experience in institutional advancement in higher education, healthcare, and the public sector. She had a proven record of success in multi-million dollar fundraising initiatives. She was a very

passionate advocate for black women and children's health. Throughout her career, she accomplished so many things. She experienced her proudest moments while she was directing and managing a fundraising consulting firm which served organizations all over the country. She was a Philanthropy/Gifting Professional who worked tirelessly in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and in many other cities in the United States through various charitable organizations and colleges. She also led Gifting Philanthropy projects in the United Kingdom and Africa. She recently accepted an Executive Director position at the McClatchy Journalism Institute, where she was able to fulfill her lifelong dream of gifting those in need, instead of asking on behalf of others. She was and has always been, instilling real positive change.

Tonya loved to write, cook, host, decorate and create. She was so creative. If there were ever something bland or dull, she found a way to make it beautiful. She made everything just as beautiful as she was. She also loved jazz music. She drew inspiration from jazz artists and enjoyed traveling the world to hear them play live when she had the opportunity.

She is survived by her daughter, Taylor Lauren Freeman of Durham, NC; her parents: George Taylor and Gwendolyn White Taylor of Coral Springs, Florida; aunts: Patricia Comfort-Capers, Wilhelmenia (Ossie) Francis, Carolyn (Charlie) Reid and Theresa Simmons; uncles: Arthur Taylor and Ed (Diana) White; a host of grand aunts, grand uncles and cousins; best friend, Seanelle Hawkins; her NY City Team: Beate Parra, Tim Gladden, Michele Richard and Debra Hutto of the San Francisco Bay area; and so many other friends and associates.

Tonya will be laid to rest with a private ceremony on January 22, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. in Charleston, SC.

Services will be livestreamed at: <http://youtube.com/nfinityforevernfinityllc>.

In lieu of Flowers, please make a Gift to The UNC Horizons Program or the McClatchy Journalism Institute, 1731 Howe Ave #242 Sacramento, CA 95825 in Tonya's honor.

Cemetery Details

Mt. Pleasant Memorial Gardens

1308 Mathis Ferry Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

Tribute Wall

KG

“ T.....I want to write something memorable and profound, yet I find myself at a loss for words. (I KNOW! I KNOW! That alone is fairly compelling!) You were everything! I loved that I was the “token white chick” in all your shenanigans! I love you and I love Taylor! Please know I will do my best to pay it forward. You were the epitome of a friend. I love you!

Karen Gupton - January 27, 2021 at 08:22 AM



“ Sending love to Taylor, family and friends of Tonya. Although Tonya had been away from Rochester for years, I still remember our girls' giggles when we got together and the warmth and generosity that Tonya effortlessly exuded. May her light will shine on in all who loved her.

Twylla Dillion
Rochester, NY

Twylla Dillion - January 25, 2021 at 08:42 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.



January 23, 2021 at 06:14 PM

TH

“ My heartfelt sympathy to this family. I love you all and I share your grief and your pain. I'm still trying to grapple with it all. I pray peace that surpasses all understanding. I will miss our long phone calls, the laughter and our many, many deep conversations. I will miss her. May God be with you all.

Theresa Harris - January 23, 2021 at 05:58 PM

SM

“ My deepest heartfelt condolences to you all. I will keep Tonya and her family who loves her in my prayers.

Sherry Merber - January 22, 2021 at 04:42 PM

FG

“ My deepest condolences to Taylor and her family on the passing of her mother Tonya. May she rest in eternal peace.

*Fredrica Gordon
Rochester NY.*

Fredrica Gordon - January 22, 2021 at 02:23 PM

SM

“ Tonya was a beacon of light for many. Among her many accomplishments, what most stood out was that she was an exceptional mother to Taylor. She was also an amazing testimony of walking the talk. I admired her ability to get things done and remain humble. She was taken far too soon but she will never be forgotten- especially her beautiful smile that was as genuine as her heart. May God bless and keep Taylor and all of her family and friends today and always. Sybil Miller and family

Sybil Miller - January 22, 2021 at 12:22 PM

HJ

“ My heartfelt condolences to Taylor and Tonya's family and loved ones. Tonya had many gifts that she shared with everyone who knew her. Her bright smile, her laughter, her humor and the confidence she displayed in meetings. May her life be honored and may she be remembered in the happy memories she gave to those who knew her.



Hendree Jones
UNC Horizons

Hendree Jones - January 22, 2021 at 10:44 AM

SH

“ Dear Taylor Freeman and Family,

We are sorry for the loss of your special love one. May God wrap his loving arms around you and the family.

Sharnia Herbin
North Carolina Central University Staff Senate

Sharnia Herbin - January 22, 2021 at 10:20 AM

EB

“ Hello! Im Emmanuel Burnett, for last 8 months I was Tonya hairstylist. On many days we had many laughs, and she definitely loved her daughter. I am heartbroken over this news. I wish the best to the family and she will definitely be missed!

Emmanuel Burnett - January 22, 2021 at 01:56 AM

NB

“ I've spent the past two days in a daze, completely stunned by the shock, trying to wrap my mind around this painful news. Yet, I want to express my deep and heartfelt sympathy to Tonya's beloved daughter, Taylor; her parents and extended family; her dear friends and sisterfriends; her Sorors of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. 💖💚; and, her many colleagues. If your life was touched by Tonya, surely you are hurting right now. I pray for us all, that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will comfort us as only God can.

I will miss Tonya's smile, her hearty laugh, her sense of style, her affinity for the finer things in life, her love for family and friends, her love of flowers and gardening (Oh, how I admired her flower gardens!), passion for her work, her giving heart, the intentional joy she found in life, and as many have said, her brilliance and creativity. Tonya was as we all should be - determined to let her light shine no matter how she felt, no matter what was going on, because she knew her light was for others.

I will miss Tonya dearly. I will love and remember her always. My memories of Elon College/University (and the early years following college) will always include her. We didn't see each other often, but to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under the heaven. I am grateful and thankful for our season together. Until our spirits meet again, my friend and Soror.

*"Rainbows do come after the storms. And so do the blooms." -
@tonyataylorphilanthropy*

Love,
Nicole A. Smith Boyd
Elon, Class of 1994
Omicron Epsilon Chapter of AKA Sorority, Inc.





Nicole Smith Boyd - January 22, 2021 at 01:44 AM

MR

“ *Rest well my Beautiful Friend. Your Gift and light will continue to shine. I will always cherish our friendship and sisterhood. Praying God's Blessings of Peace, Love and Comfort covers Taylor, your parents, and your family.*
Love,
Michelle & Travis Rouse



Michelle Boyette Rouse - January 21, 2021 at 10:52 PM

MB

“ *2 files added to the tribute wall*



Maria Bright - January 21, 2021 at 10:08 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 09:49 PM

MB

“ Every day feels like a dream that I will wake up and it will not be true. This past week, I continue to see signs of you as I walked throughout my home. Although our friendship was for a short time, we worked, laughed, and cried together but always supported each other throughout. Tonya was such a brilliant, talented, and caring woman which was a true GIFT to us all. This is why the meaning of gift describes her so well. “a thing given willingly to someone without payment or a present. She gave her all to everyone. If it was her time to listen and counsel, talents for the greater good, and treasures to give for those in need or just because.

We give our sincere condolences to her family and friends during this time. We hope God provides peace and comfort with the outpouring of love shown for Tonya. She was one of a kind that will truly be missed but her spirit will last forever in each one of us who were blessed in her company. We will continue to carry her shining light as we live our days on this earth and rejoice when we meet again.

Love,
The Bright family (Maria, Cedric, and Drew)

Maria Bright - January 21, 2021 at 09:48 PM

FL

“ From Russell, Gavin & Lori purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.



From Russell, Gavin & Lori - January 21, 2021 at 08:59 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Catherine Downey - January 21, 2021 at 08:19 PM

MC

“ *Michael & Sally Mitrovic & Children purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



Michael & Sally Mitrovic & Children - January 21, 2021 at 04:30 PM

MR

“ *My deepest condolences to Tonya's family, friends, and loved ones. Tonya was an incredible mentor to me, and helped me through a really challenging time as a young leader growing a nonprofit called Musical Empowerment (ME). She gave me the support and courage that I needed to lead and thrive. ME has grown tremendously thanks to her guidance and would not be where it is today without her. I will be forever inspired by and grateful for her passion, boldness, kindness, and talent. She is going to be greatly missed! - Meredith Richard*

Meredith Richard - January 21, 2021 at 04:19 PM

TF

“ *The Iannotti family purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



The Iannotti family - January 21, 2021 at 04:14 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 03:47 PM

GF

“ *Greg & Andrea Flood purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



Greg & Andrea Flood - January 21, 2021 at 03:40 PM



“ *Heavenly Light was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 12:12 PM

JF

“ *Jovany M. Felix purchased the Ringed by Love for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



Jovany M. Felix - January 21, 2021 at 11:44 AM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 11:27 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 10:53 AM

KE

“ *Such a wonderful spirit! Tonya's brilliance was a light for us all to see! You will be missed and remembered!*

Khalil Ekulona

Khalil Ekulona - January 21, 2021 at 10:46 AM

RL

“ Taylor, my deepest condolences as you celebrate your Mom’s life. Sending hugs and love. Ruby Lockhart

Ruby Lockhart - January 21, 2021 at 10:12 AM



“ I worked with Tonya at the Harley School in Rochester, NY We became friends and shared many memories. You will truly be missed. Rest easy my friend, until we meet again.

Margaret Cusimano - January 21, 2021 at 09:40 AM

KS

“ I worked with Tonya at The Harley School. She always came into work with a big smile and time with her was always filled with hard work, but a ton of laughter. She had such a beautiful spirit and I am shocked that she is gone. She will be missed by many! Karen Saludo, The Harley School

Karen Saludo - January 21, 2021 at 09:16 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.



January 21, 2021 at 09:11 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Ms. Tonya Rachelle Taylor.*



January 21, 2021 at 09:05 AM



“ *Condolences to family, friends, and all that knew & loved her. Tonya was simply elegant & thorough in life, words & deeds. Her sorority sisters (💖💚) and fellow Elon alumni will remember her fondly.*



Tonya did something for me over a decade ago that has now (today)recharged me to go forth.

Blessings & comfort to all. - A. Mitchell

**pic: 2012-Elon U Homecoming/25th AKA Chapter (Omicron Epsilon) celebration.*

A Mitchell - January 21, 2021 at 08:19 AM



Not sure why pic didn't attach... Sorry

A Mitchell - January 21, 2021 at 08:21 AM

PP

“ True friends are a blessing in this life. I'm grateful to call you one. You will be missed. From our days at Elon to meeting in Durham, football games in Chapel Hill, Elon homecoming year after year. You always found time to be a friend, to listen, to vent, to celebrate. Peace to you and your family.



Phil Powell - January 20, 2021 at 11:04 PM

TG

“ My condolences to Tonya's family and her beautiful daughter Taylor who was the light of her life. I wish I had those cute pictures we took when we went to dinner at TAPAS. I enjoyed our very personal conversations. Rest in heaven my beautiful Soror.



Soror Tonya G (the other Tonya)

Tonya Guzman - January 20, 2021 at 10:26 PM

WB

“ TT, words can't express the hurt and pain I feel in knowing that I will never be able to physically see you again. But I do thank God for placing you in my life and want you to know that I will always remember you. Rest in Peace my friend.



William Bell - January 20, 2021 at 08:28 PM

BC

“ I'm shocked and saddened to hear of Tonya's passing. I will always have great memories of her for she's always had a warm, welcoming spirit and her smile was signature. My sincere condolences to her family. RIP Tonya. #elonfamily

Respectfully, Bernard Coulter

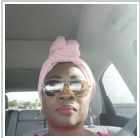
Bernard Coulter - January 20, 2021 at 06:28 PM

DR

“ Such a wonderful and giving soul from our days at Elon dropping me off or picking me when I need a ride to Baltimore.... running into you homecoming or jazz fest rest east #phiskee.



Daniel Ridley - January 20, 2021 at 06:11 PM



“ Dear Taylor family:

While I did not know Soror Tonya personally, I feel as if I have known her family forever through the mutual connection we have in Theresa Harris. I am very sorry for your loss Taylor family and my prayer is that the Lord will give you strength with each passing day.

*Deepest sympathy,
Angela Harris*

Angela Harris - January 20, 2021 at 12:05 PM

TM

“ *TT was a incredible force professional and loving spirit as a friend. You are loved and will be incredibly missed. My sincere condolences to Taylor and the family. You are in my prayers.*



Timothy Minor - January 20, 2021 at 09:33 AM

TL

“ *I am heartbroken to hear of the passing of such a beautiful spirit, and dear Soror. Soror Tonya was a trailblazer and a joy to know and love. Her beautiful smile, intellect, and kindness will greatly be missed. Rest in heaven, dear Soror. You are gone but not forgotten. Until we meet again...*
Soror Tracey Helton Lewis



Tracey Helton Lewis - January 20, 2021 at 08:28 AM

LB

“ Didn't sleep all night after learning of the loss of my sweetheart, Tonya Taylor from another dear heart, DrSeanelle Hawkins. My heart aches. Tonya was such a spirit of promise and light. Her impeccable taste and love of all things beautiful, fighting spirit and open, loving mind and heart fill me with many kind memories and such gratitude for our sisterhood. I remain forever blessed she chose me as her friend and life coach. Rest in heaven my angel. 🥺🙏 #makewaveschangelives



Lydia Boddie-Rice - January 20, 2021 at 07:48 AM

JS

“ Good memories are a gift. May they bring much solace to you, Taylor and family. I am so very grateful for the friendship Tonya and I shared over the years. Janet Smith

janet smith - January 20, 2021 at 06:02 AM

CT

“ Love, broken heart, peace, heaven blessed with a beautiful soul that impacted so many lives & loved by her Omicron Epsilon Soror's forever. Pink & Green love from earth to heaven my Soror. My love & condolences to your family, especially your beautiful daughter. May God forever wrap his loving arms of peace & understanding. Love you Soror, Skee Wee Love Soror Crystal Morrison Taylor , Spr 87

crystal taylor - January 19, 2021 at 11:53 PM

BL

“ I send my deepest condolences to Tonya's family, especially her daughter Taylor. I can confidently say the lessons she taught me will live on forever. My life has been forever changed by Tonya's light. She was my mentor, my friend, my sorority sister, my motivator. May God wrap you in His arms. May the Peace of Christ hold your family close. May the Holy Spirit guide us in your absence.



Beth Leigh - January 19, 2021 at 10:33 PM

DH

“ Tonya and I shared many great memories together that I will always cherish. Late night Jack & Jill meetings, sorority updates, holidays, milestones with our children. Rest in heaven my dear Tonya 🍀💕💕



Debbie Hutto - January 19, 2021 at 10:15 PM

SS

“ Tonya and I began working together last year and I'll never forget how our virtual interactions seemed to change one day when she realized we were sorority sisters. The recognition made us giddy and interrupted our business meeting. From then on, we shared many "after-meeting" conversations that had little to do with professional business. Tonya's charm and brains made her a successful fundraiser. She loved her family a lot and spoke of them everytime we had those after-meeting conversations. I was so looking forward to meeting her in person.

Sheila Solomon - January 19, 2021 at 02:27 PM