



# ***Through His Lens II: A Capsule Collection of Edward B. Taylor***

Born in Savannah, Georgia, Mr. Edward Butler Taylor (1908 - 1999) is popularly referenced as being the first African-American commercial photographer of Dayton, Ohio.

Pursuing an educational opportunity to improve his life, he relocated to “The Gem City” in 1929. In its downtown, he attained a position at Rike-Kumler Company and, later, at the United Brethren Building (UB). During his time at the latter, Mr. Taylor became interested in photography, collaborating with colleagues, studying at the Dayton Art Institute and working in Wolfe Studio of the UB. His continuous training and commitment to excellence led him to serve as a photo lab technician at Highlight Studio on W. Fifth Street and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Greene and Montgomery counties.

Mr. Edward B. Taylor is most fondly remembered by many for his vibrant visual representation of life in the Black community of Dayton from the 1950s until the 1990s. Spanning nearly four decades, his chronicle of people, events and gatherings memorialized the diverse realities of African-Americans that were all too often intentionally omitted from mainstream audiences. His range of subjects included anniversaries, birthdays, church productions, civic functions, fashion shows, formal balls, family reunions, graduations, sports outings, social affairs and weddings. The moments that Mr. Taylor vividly captured on film readily engage viewers, as his images portray beauty, commitment, dignity, joy, love, power, pride and unity.

The *Capsule Collection* is representative of an extensive cache of negatives and photographs graciously gifted to Dayton Metro Library by Mr. Taylor’s daughters, Lynnette Taylor Heard and Lisa Taylor. Inviting guests to “see” the past, face-to-face with historic images frequently absent from local contemporary community memory, their recent donation commemorates the spectacular vision of their father, Mr. Edward B. Taylor.

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