

Taylor, Charles Richard (1921–2014)

DONNA TAYLOR EVANS

Donna Taylor Evans, Ph.D. in education, is currently retired from her work as a teacher, school counselor, mental health counselor, and author for more than 40 years. Her father was Charles R. Taylor and she has one daughter.

Charles Richard Taylor was a pastor, evangelist, missionary, educator and church administrator at the division and General Conference levels.

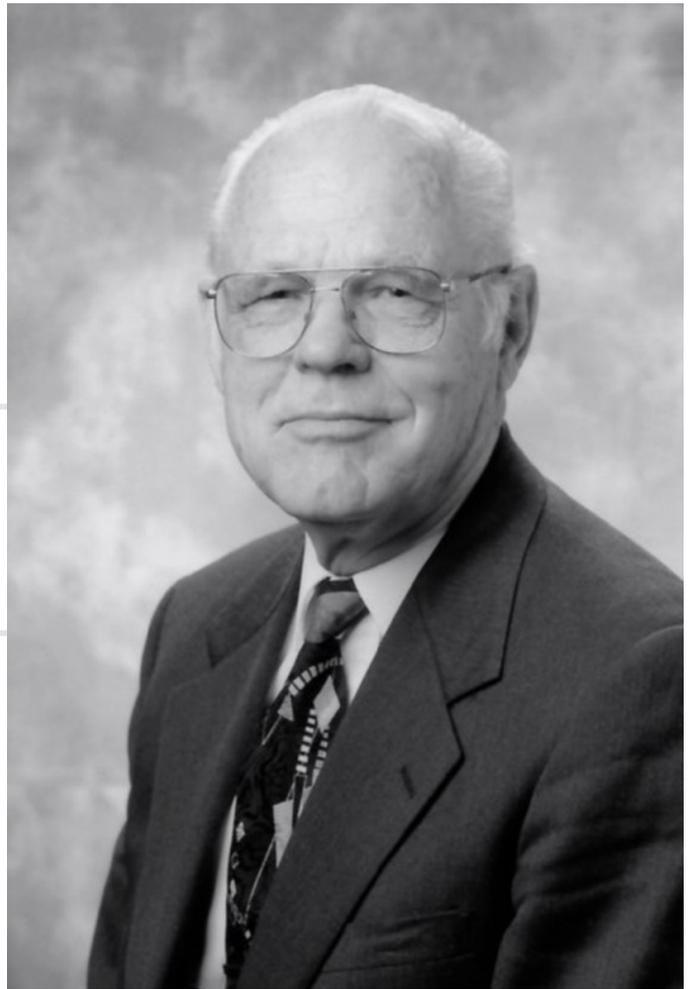
Early Life

Charles Taylor was born November 2, 1921, to George and Gladys Taylor in the boys' dormitory of Brazil Adventist College near Santo Amaro in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, where his father was first dean of men and later director, and where both

parents were teachers.¹ In 1931 the family moved to Chillan, the Seventh-day Adventist College in Chile where his father was college president and teacher. In 1935 they moved again, this time to Buenos Aires, Argentina, site of the Austral Union headquarters. Charles and his younger brother Melvin were educated first in Portuguese, then in Spanish, and finally, by correspondence, in English.

Education and Marriage

In 1939, Charles was sent alone by sea to the United States to attend Emmanuel Missionary College in Michigan to finish academy. Then he went to Pacific Union College in California, graduating in 1943 with a degree in theology. He married June Laura Hulbert on August 20, 1942, planning that after graduation he would return with her to South America, which he still considered home. They had three children, a son David born during their time in Cuba; daughter Donna, born while they were on furlough in California; and daughter Myrna, born



Charles Taylor

Photo courtesy of Donna Evans.

in Mexico City. In 1955, Charles completed his M.A. in Education from Pacific Union College. He received a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Maryland in 1965.

Career

After graduation, Charles and June worked in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a few months assisting with meetings in which the public was invited to hear Seventh-day Adventist preaching. In 1943 he accepted a position as dean of men and teacher at what was to become Antillian College in Santa Clara, Cuba. While there, he built an observatory so he could teach astronomy. In 1949 he moved to Mexico City to become youth director for the Mexican Union, a position he held until 1956. He traveled the country holding youth camps and providing training for medical cadets. He then returned to Cuba as professor of theology and head of the religion department at Antillian College. During their time at the school there, the Taylor family and other staff and students experienced the strafing and bombing of the campus during the Castro revolution, and they also hosted part of the rebel army during the battle of Santa Clara. In 1959 he went back to Mexico, this time as president of the Colegio Vocacional y Profesional Montemorelos, an Adventist college in Northern Mexico. In 1967 he was asked to become director of education for the Inter-American Division, where he served until 1975. At the 1975 General Conference Session in Vienna, Charles was elected to the position of associate director of education for the General Conference of SDA in Washington, D.C., and in 1981 became director of the General Conference education department. In 1985 he became special assistant to Neal Wilson, President of the General Conference. He was instrumental in founding Global Mission, a strategy for reaching areas of the world where the SDA Church was not present. He continued working for the General Conference until his retirement in 1999.

Later Years

Following a late retirement, he traveled widely with his wife and their friends and enjoyed contact with a far-flung circle of friends connected with his work for the Church around the globe. In 2006, he and June moved to Collegedale, Tennessee, to be near their son David. Charles died February 18, 2014 in the Hospice Care Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at the age of 92. He had dedicated his life to the work of the Church.

Contributions

As youth director for the Mexican Union during the Korean War, Charles began training Adventist young men in Mexico as medical cadets so that, as in the US at the time, they might have the option of not carrying weapons during the required military service. He was able to gain military approval for this program in the country.

Charles was an outstanding teacher who loved his students and inspired them with his energy and mental acuity. He taught college classes in Mexico and Cuba and was an inspiration to many of his students who later became regional and global leaders in the church. As a school administrator, he brought a sense of family and

community to college students and was able to gain respect for the college at Montemorelos from non-Adventist professionals in positions of authority.

As Inter-American Division director of education, Charles helped the college at Montemorelos, Mexico, where he had formerly been president, attain university status and start a medical school. Following an executive order by the governor of the state of Nuevo Leon making the Adventist College at Montemorelos a university, Charles helped prepare the report that accompanied the request from the Mexican Union to the General Conference to create the first Adventist University outside of the North American Division. He worked with the Mexican Union administration and education representatives from the Inter-American Division and General Conference to make sure each side understood the other, and he made sure there were good answers to all questions that might arise. This was the pioneer act that would eventually lead to the establishment of Adventist universities around the world rather than solely in the United States.

As a North American, but the son of missionary parents, Charles brought a more international perspective to the work of the Adventist Church. He was able to see the various divisions as equal partners rather than the "overseas" divisions as dependents of the North American Division and subordinate to it. He understood that institutions in one culture might function differently than the same institutions in another culture, but be equally valid. He sought repeatedly to demonstrate this through logic and through statistical compilations in his work at the Inter-American Division and at the General Conference.

Because of this perspective, Charles was instrumental in initiating the changes that reflect the global nature of the Adventist church. At the General Conference, in his early reports regarding the department of education, he was the first to treat all divisions alike, moving North America from the first and main focus of the report to its alphabetical place in the list of divisions, and giving all divisions equal space in the report. He did the same for the *Annual Statistical Report* of the General Conference section on education, which led to the committee making the same changes for the entire report, and then for the entire *SDA Yearbook*. Under his leadership, the department of education was the first to separate its North American Division staff from the world staff. He felt strongly that the world headquarters should be characterized by a global nature and that the North American Division should have its own staff separate from the General Conference staff. Eventually all departments of the North American Division became separate from the world staff at the General Conference.

As special assistant to Neil Wilson when he was president of the world Church, Charles was instrumental in the development of Global Mission (he was once introduced as the "grandfather" of Global Mission), a program focused on entering the population segments in the world where there is no Adventist presence. The goal is to provide an Adventist church in every segment of one million people who had not previously had direct contact with Adventism. Charles gathered data, created maps, and persuaded staff from each division to join the effort. At one point he even volunteered to be the pioneer to enter and establish a church in one of those segments, and to that end he began to study Chinese. Although he never was sent, he continued Chinese lessons until his

death.

Source

Taylor, Charles R. *MK, Missionaries' Kid*. Autobiography, 2001. Edited and published by Ann and David Taylor in 2015.

NOTES

1. This article is based on the author's knowledge as daughter of Charles R. Taylor and Taylor, Charles R. Taylor, *MK, Missionaries' Kid* (autobiography, 2001; edited and published by Ann and David Taylor in 2015) and personal interviews with administrators of the Mexican Union, the Inter-American Division and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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