

Taylor

(Continued from Page 16) where young Taylor got his formal education, excelling in sports and the classroom. He was selected for the National Honor Society, while more than 57 colleges ex-

pressed their desire to have him on their football team.

Michigan and Ohio State University headed the competition, with Michigan coach Chalmers "Bump" Elliott, graduate assistant Tony Ma-

son, basketball great Cazzie Russell and seemingly the entire campus leading the effort to sway young Taylor's decision.

He became Michigan's all-time leading rusher and a member of an undefeated team. Taylor loved the campus and social life in Ann Arbor, joining Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

During the early 1970s, few minority students were

enrolled at Michigan. The black student-athletes banded together, forming the "Seven Mellow Men."

They became a "who's who" of football glory, including Reggie McKenzie, Mike Taylor, Tom Darden, Butch Carpenter, Mike Odom, Glen Dowdy and Taylor. Of course, they were the talk of the town, if not the nation, especially leading up to the Michigan-Ohio State

game.

Taylor's professional football career, after being drafted by the Atlanta Falcons, included stints with the St. Louis Cardinals, Calgary Stampeders and Philadelphia Eagles.

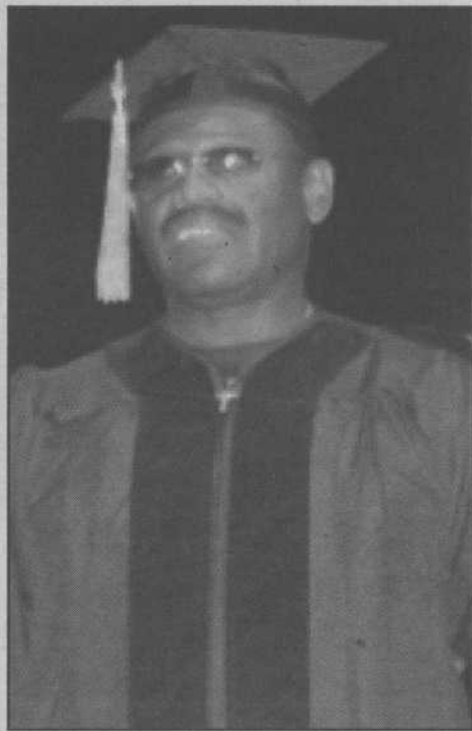
Taylor's brother, James, was the only immediate family member to make the trip from the Midwest to attend graduation ceremonies. He said his fellow siblings have

always supported every thing he's ever accomplished.

Although his mother has passed, he will always remember her emphasis on education.

How does Dr. Billy or Dr. William L. Taylor Jr. sound to students?

"I continue to stress academia to all of the students," he said. "I have found my niche and I love what I am doing."



"This has been my goal for years, ever since I was a little kid and heard people refer to Martin Luther King Jr. as 'Doctor.'" — William Taylor

Parlors

(Continued from Page 6) them."

The new facilities are anticipated. "Thank God, they're coming," says Rev. John Wright, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Guilford in Columbia. "This is simply excellent for the community. The first African-American undertaker here since Howard County was founded in the 18th century, and this is the seventh richest county in the nation.

"I welcome it," he says. "I've been pastor here 32 years, and all that time I've been trying to get a Black funeral home here."

Willie and Brian Howell also plan to break ground in Howard County this summer and expect to open next March.

"The first African-Americans who came to Columbia are now growing into seniors," says Willie Howell, 43. But first, because it was a residential area, he had to get his 1.8 acres zoned commercial by the Howard County Council. "It was a long, drawn-out process that took about a year," he says, knowing that the effort was worth it because "the Census Bureau says the baby boomers who started there are now at burial age. And early next year, we are breaking ground in Ann Arundel County for another 9,000-square-foot facility."

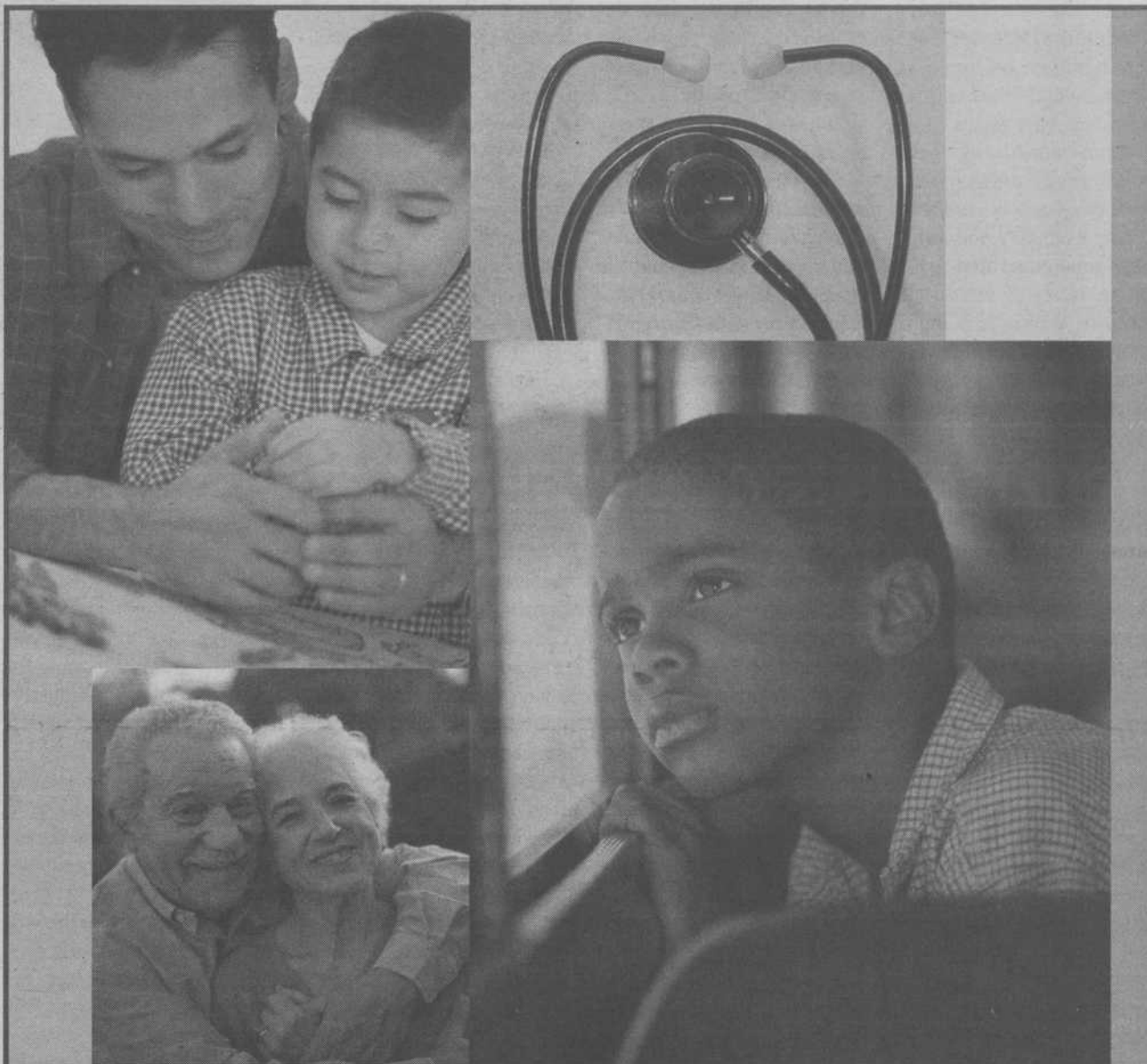
Because the death of a loved one is sad enough, "we want people to feel at home," Brian Howell explains, showing a visitor their elegant, four-year-old funeral home which is draped in luxury at 4600 Liberty Heights Ave. Chandeliers and crystal candles adorn the ceiling and walls above a roaring fireplace that will be recreated in the new facility, and include a garden with a waterfall.

"We'll be located off the Beltway," Willie, the older brother, says as Brian looks on. They have reason to be proud.

"We'll be accessible to Laurel, Columbia, Prince George's County and Elkridge," he said.

Olger Derch Sr., the mortician who taught the Howell brothers, listens to his protégés with unconcealed happiness. These brothers are making come true a dream of his for a Black undertaker parlor in Columbia, where he has lived for more than 25 years. Derch has seen changes during a half century in the business, including Whites buried by Black undertakers when they married into a Black family. Multi-racial individuals are also included, like the majority of African-Americans who are still buried by Black funeral directors.

"This business is still very segregated," says Sharon Seay, executive director of the NFDMA, an industry group that represents roughly 2,300 Black funeral homes.



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